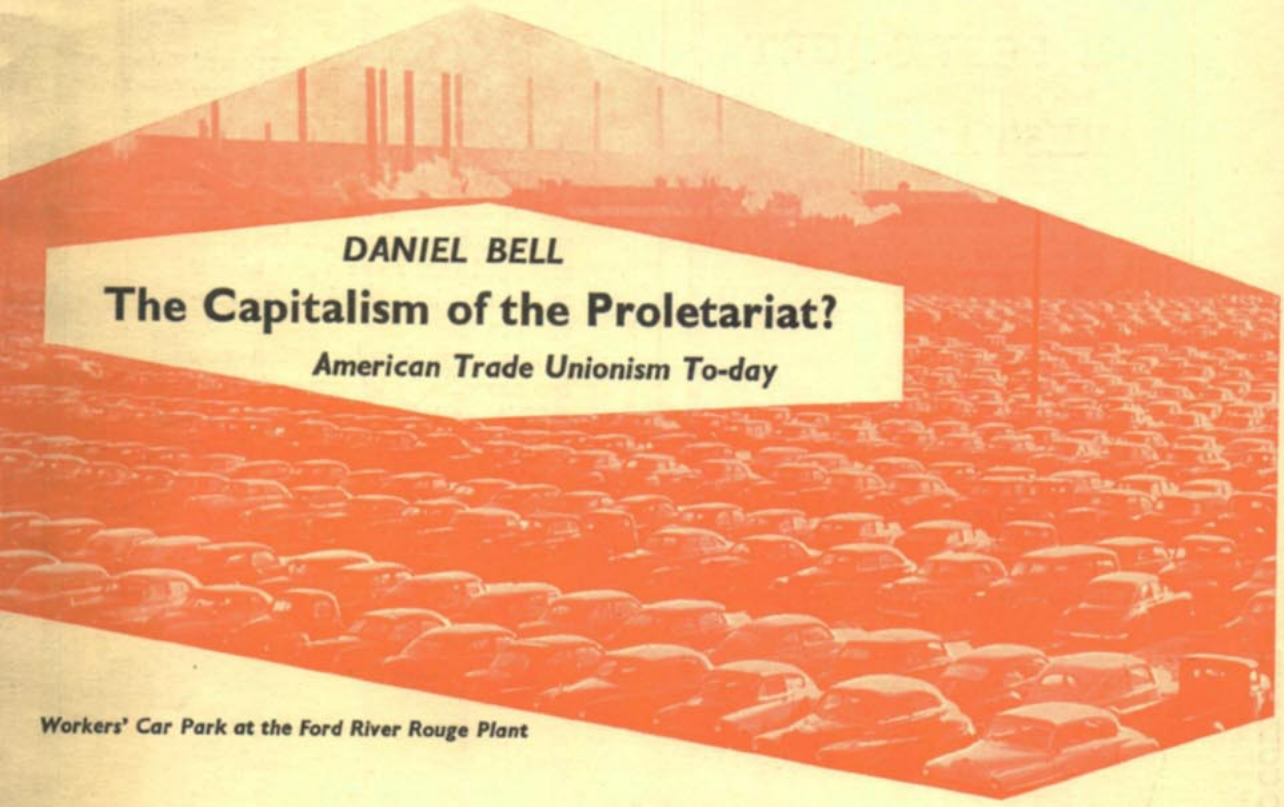
Encounter



DANIEL BELL

The Capitalism of the Proletariat?

American Trade Unionism To-day

Workers' Car Park at the Ford River Rouge Plant

TOMMASO LANDOLFI: **Gogol's Wife (a story)**

ERICH HELLER: **The Conservative Imagination**

SYLVIA SPRIGGE: **A Statue on the Janiculum**

J. A. LUKACS: **The World's Cities—Philadelphia**

GEORGE MIKES: **The Country with a Smile**

FEBRUARY 1958 53 MONTHLY 3s.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BELLOMETTI

LE PERROQUET

RESTAURANT

31, LEICESTER SQUARE

WHI. 2996

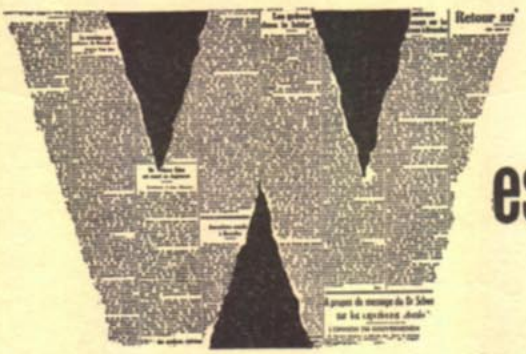
ONE OF LONDON'S
MOST CHARMING

Notice to Subscribers

Since ENCOUNTER first appeared in 1953 there have been two heavy increases in postal rates (the most recent last October). These have doubled the cost of posting copies. So far ENCOUNTER has borne the whole cost of postage, but it is regretted that some share of this must now be passed on to subscribers.

The annual subscription rate has accordingly been raised to £2 (U.S.A. and Canada $7.50). This increase still does not cover the full cost of postage. ENCOUNTER will continue to bear the remaining expense.

WESTERN WORLD OCCIDENT



estern world

your magazine, Sir !

- The world's news as seen by the great men of our time!
- Titles and names at your service for your personal information!
- Precis of all topical problems which enable you to get them into focus!
- A wide variety of subjects that make you **the man in the know** about everything that matters!
- An objectivity that welcomes controversy :
  The month debate gives you the viewpoint of two personalities holding opposite positions on the same problem.

5 definite advantages which make a reader of Western World an objectively well informed man.

As a man who wishes to be up to date, as a man who values his culture and standing you will ask your bookseller to take out your subscription to

WESTERN WORLD OCCIDENT

Rue Belliard, 35 — Brussels (Belgium).

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Encounter

edited by STEPHEN SPENDER *and* IRVING KRISTOL

FEBRUARY 1958. VOL. X. NO. 2

Published monthly at Panton House 25 Haymarket London SW1
3s. per number (USA and Canada 75c). Postage per copy: Inland 6d., Foreign 4½d.
Yearly subscription (including postage) £2: USA and Canada $7.50: India 12 rupees
US and Canadian subscriptions may be entered at British Publications Inc.,
30 East 60th Street New York 22. Application for second class matter pending
at the Post Office New York N.Y.

A Statue on the Janiculum	3	SYLVIA SPRIGGE
Gogol's Wife (a story)	10	TOMMASO LANDOLFI
The Capitalism of the Proletariat?	17	DANIEL BELL
In Cyprus (poem)	24	WILLIAM SCOBIE
Baited (poem)	25	JON SILKIN
The Country with a Smile	26	GEORGE MIKES
Five Poems	31	MIRON BIALOSZEWSKI TRANSLATED BY CZESLAW MILOSZ
The World's Cities: Philadelphia	34	J. A. LUKACS
November 1956 (poem)	41	DAVID WRIGHT
The Song of the Ill-Loved (poem)	42	GUILLAUME APOLLINAIRE TRANSLATED BY OLIVER BERNARD
The Conservative Imagination	46	ERICH HELLER
From the Other Shore	57	

DISCUSSION

Britain's New Class	59	FRANK HILTON

LETTERS

SIR JOHN COCKCROFT	65	WILLIAM EMPSON
M. J. ROSS-MACDONALD		AUBERON HERBERT
K. A. JELENSKI		MORTON PUNER
J. GORDON		ARTHUR R. COHEN
HENRY ADLER		IRVING KRISTOL
TERRY HILL		STEPHEN SPENDER

BOOKS

Tibor Déry	72	PAUL IGNOTUS
The Hindu Personality		GEOFFREY GORER
Sweeping the Interpreter's House		HILARY CORKE
The Case of Comrade Leonhard		MAX BELOFF
New Novels		GRAHAM HOUGH

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Are these the happiest men in industry?

Ex-Picture Post reporter Trevor Philpott went to Corby and talked to five men whose life is steel.

EACH OF THESE MEN has worked a lifetime by the sweat of his brow. Each plays a vital part in what is now Europe's biggest and most modern tube works. Looking back over the years, they look back in pride.

Sid Wright looked down the quarry, wide and deep as the bed of a great river, towards the six hundred and fifty ton excavator which was peeling back the earth above the iron ore. "She does as much work in fifty seconds as I used to do in a full day's work. Course, it was wheelbarrows and planks then. Now it's railway trucks and steel track. Yes, it's a satisfying sort of job, the way we do it to-day. I've had a ton or two of ore out of Northamptonshire in forty years."

'Young Sketch,' whom a few know as George Patrick, tends the four great blast furnaces. He's built rather like a blast furnace himself. Resting his hands on his bay window, he said "Yes, there's a lot of beer gone into that. I need it. But it's not as hot now as in the war, when we had the furnaces covered so you couldn't see a wink from a few hundred feet up. Now you can see the glow forty miles away on the right night.

"I was here before Stewarts and Lloyds came, and I watched them build up this plant and take it down and build it up again. And blow me if my only daughter didn't marry a blast furnaceman. He's a supervisor already."

"Both sides must be pretty satisfied"

Bertie Oliver has been caring for the insides of Bessemer converters for forty-six years.

"There's not much I don't know about those old ladies. I left a two-horse tram in 1911 to go on the steel plant at Bilston. I came up to Corby when they opened the new works in 1934. After the Black Country, the woods around here were a real treat. My boy's at the works, too, now and laughs his head off when I take pigs' trotters to eat on the shift."

Bill Muir came out from under the bonnet of his saloon car. "They used to say you could tell a steel man by the colour of his face," he said. "Well, look at me. Pale and interesting. They load slab furnaces by watching television screens and pressing buttons, nowadays. Between us, my brothers and I have put in a hundred and thirty-one years' service with this firm. I suppose both sides must be pretty satisfied."

600 Gold Watches

'Big Chiv' (full title Charlie Clitheroe) is over seventy and looks as strong as an ox. "Six bob a week errand boy, I started as. Then someone spotted I was a pretty big lad, and I got a job on the locos. It's been locos ever since. These we've got now are little beauties. Fire her right, keep her pressure up, and she'll do anything. Gives you a good appetite, too, this job. Seventeen bob's worth of meat I'll eat, at the week-end. My wife used to say to me, 'You never praise my food, do you Charlie?' 'I never leave none, do I?' I'd say to her. The boys ask me sometimes why I don't marry again. Well, a good wife's like a good job. One's enough for most men."

All these men possess a gold watch awarded to mark thirty years of service with the firm. There are over six hundred more like them at Corby, working still. Men who began in the Steel Industry, stayed with it, and helped it to grow. This is how they talk, as they near the end of a working life well spent.

This report was commissioned by the British Iron and Steel Federation, which believes that everyone should know the facts about Steel, and about the men and organisations that make it.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sylvia Sprigge

A Statue on the Janiculum

The Story of Lauro de Bosis

THE visitor to Rome who walks in the Pincio Gardens or on the Janiculum often comes upon a bust mounted upon a pedestal. The head greets the walker at eye level, and the whole little marble monument often has something challenging about it, so that one is tempted to look up in some encyclopaedia who the hero was, for many are unfamiliar. The Janiculum has far more of these memorials than the Pincio. On the Janiculum are all the heroes of the Italian Risorgimento, looking at each other and at you, and watched over from a great height by an immense great horse and rider—Garibaldi himself. Recently a new bust on a new pedestal has been added to the big family over which Garibaldi presides. It stands just after the Renaissance villa which is now the Finnish Legation to the Holy See and it bears the legend: LAURO DE BOSIS.

There was a twilight early in October, just over a quarter of a century ago in 1931, when Mussolini's Rome was suddenly subjected to an unexpected leaflet raid, one of the very earliest of its kind. The young man who was flying the little aeroplane from which they dropped failed to return from his lone flight. Within a few months, a Chair of Italian Studies was endowed at Harvard University in his name—the Lauro de Bosis Chair—and the endowment came from Ruth Draper, the famous character actress.

Ruth Draper died on December 29, 1956. She was a kind woman, always giving her great earnings away to this and that needy individual and to charity. Once, and once only, did she become deeply involved in a political cause, when she fell in love with Lauro de Bosis, fifteen years her junior. Then, with all the passion usually reserved for her work, she threw herself and her resources into the battle, and lost. The Harvard Chair remains as a kind of proud assertion that such battles are never quite lost. The bust of Lauro on the Janiculum confirms the fact.

WALKING on the Janiculum last autumn, I stood for a moment in front of Lauro's head—it is not a good likeness—and the whole story came back to me with great vividness. It belongs to our time, and it has never been fully told, for Ruth would not speak of it, and in her lifetime one would respect her mourning. I knew them both, and perhaps just on that account it is as well to let others speak first.

Lauro was a poet and the son of a poet, and a classical scholar. One of Ruth's first tasks after his death was to pay for an edition of Lauro's poem *Icarus* with her own (not satisfactory) translation interleaved, and the whole printed by the Oxford University Press, with a preface by the late Gilbert Murray. Of Lauro, Professor Murray wrote:

> ...he was the man to face death for a cause. As I look again through his *Icaro*, his translations of Sophocles, still more perhaps some of his

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

unpublished essays on philosophical subjects, the general nature of that cause reveals itself. Allowing for Lauro de Bosis' knowledge of science and his modern outlook, it is the old cause of Mazzini and Condorçet, of Shelley and the young Browning; the ideal of those who think little of the conventional side of life and much of the spiritual, who love justice as they love beauty, and who claim freedom as a necessity without which the soul cannot live.

There is no reason why Gilbert Murray should be right about Lauro: yet there was about Gilbert Murray a kind of earnestness and dedication in all matters concerning the humanities, so that one read him or listened to him with great attention and profit. When he committed himself about someone, as he did in his preface to *Icarus*, there was reason to pay attention. But who would listen in 1933? It was a frightful year. Hitler had just come into power. The whole ugly tapestry of the next twelve years seemed to be unrolling, and the little book published by the O.U.P. with its poor prose translation hardly sold any copies. In Mussolini's Italy no one would certainly dare to review it. At Harvard the Lauro de Bosis Chair now had its first occupant: the late Professor Gaetano Salvemini, the combative historian of anti-Fascism. He held it until 1952.

No more was written of Lauro de Bosis until a small book of memoirs appeared in Italian in 1954 under the bitter title of *Italiano Inutile*. The author, Professor Giuseppe Prezzolini, was a voluntary exile from Italy who had become a United States citizen and now lives in New York. He knew Lauro well, for Prezzolini was one of the Italians in the Casa Italiana attached to Columbia University in New York, where Lauro was also teaching in 1930. Prezzolini tells the story briefly, and ends:

> Certainly Lauro wanted to fight Fascism by his death. No credit is to be taken from anyone. The point is to understand matters more clearly, and they are more complicated than the hagiographers and the political friends, or rather those who prefer politics to people, make out. But it is clear too that his death must also be attributed to those who cast doubts upon him and drove him to give indisputable proof of the sincerity of his anti-Fascist faith. It was a gesture against Fascism, but above all, it was the result of the despair which, according to one credible witness, overwhelmed him in the last months of his life.

Who is right, Gilbert Murray or Giuseppe Prezzolini? Or is this but another instance of the ebb and flow of opinion in our so critical day and age? Gilbert Murray we place unhesitatingly in the great tradition of those who "think little of the conventional side of life and much of the spiritual," to use his own words. Professor Prezzolini ends his essays with the declaration that he finds himself so unhappy in his New York pent-house at the age of seventy-two that his only hope henceforth is to find himself at the heart and not on the periphery of the first hydrogen or cobalt bomb that will be (not might be) let loose on that city. Perhaps all his life (and he had many early successes) the Italian professor has been more liege to despair than to philosophy. His relations with Fascism were complicated, not altogether unfriendly, and it is possible that he wishes Lauro de Bosis' relations with anti-Fascism to appear equally complicated. I do not think they were, and having by accident been involved fairly closely in the last months of his life, I think the story could now have some fresh light thrown upon it.

LAURO DE BOSIS was the youngest son of a large family. His father, Adolfo de Bosis, was a well-known poet in the d'Annunzian tradition, and the best translator Shelley has ever had in any language. His wife, Lilian, was the daughter of one of those American Baptist ministers who considered Italy as a legitimate mission field, in the last century. Adolfo swept her into other worlds, and all the children were brought up on Shelley, as though the world's great age had really begun anew, and they all knew

> *the desire of the moth for the star,*
> *of the night for the morrow,*
> *the devotion to something afar*
> *from the sphere of our sorrow....*

None were baptised—a rare thing in the Rome of those days.

Lauro was eighteen at the time of the

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

march on Rome, and at the University, reading science. He was tolerant about the Blackshirts at first, as most Italian students were. That generation hardly knew what we know now, that dictators live by "purges" and end by plunging us all into the violence which they practise, whether their origin be Communist, Fascist, or Military. When I first met Lauro in 1927, five years after the march on Rome and three years after the murder of the leader of the opposition, Matteotti, he was beginning to realise what Mussolini was aiming at. Lauro was determined to get to America, and out of the tense propagandistic atmosphere of Rome. He was, by nature, a gay-hearted, intuitive young man, gifted with a fine memory for verse, English, Latin, Greek, French, and Italian, and he had a degree in chemistry at Rome University. Children adored him, for he could amuse them with a hundred stories and tricks. Women loved him, and he them. Greek scholars respected him for his translations of Sophocles, and the King of Italy had attended a performance of Lauro's translations on the Palatine in 1923. He swam like a fish; walked fast and far, and liked sleeping out of doors whenever there was a full moon. Fortune seemed to smile on everything he undertook, even to providing a semi-official post for him in the United States. Thither he went in 1928 as Secretary of the Italo-America Society, determined to concentrate on what is now called "cultural" activity. Italian painting, music, literature, all the arts: these he would provide for the members, through lecturers and performers, slides and debates. So rich is the heritage of Italy in the arts, that one might ignore Fascism and all its works. That, of course, did not happen. One may not live in the past, and hope to avoid the present. Moreover, Lauro kept running into ardent Italo-American Fascists, clamouring for meetings extolling Mussolini's régime. Sometimes he had to provide more contemporary programmes than he had envisaged. All this opened his eyes and kindled his love of liberty for its own sake, a passion which we in our age have tried, but failed, to analyse out of existence.

In 1927 he had written a verse tragedy about the disaster that befell Icarus, the son of Daedalus, who flew away from the clutches of the despot Minos, to freedom in Athens, but went too near the sun, and fell into the Hellespont. Twenty centuries later Breughel had painted the scene. Twenty-five centuries later Lauro de Bosis made the subject a vehicle for his own hopes and fears.

In New York he met Ruth Draper. She was born in that city in 1889, and was already famous in 1928, and fifteen years his senior. An affection sprang up the like of which she had never experienced, and he for his part had never encountered such single-minded devotion. To one friend he wrote that there was only one woman he would marry, had he been a marrying man, and this was she. Like many artists, Ruth had the heart of a child. A part of this tragedy—for this story has high tragedy in it—was that love should have come into her life so late, and so briefly, with long time to grieve.

Together they read *Icarus*. It was full of vague hope about a not too distant future:

> *...il sorgere d'un tempo*
> *nuovo e ferace e a le vittorie inteso*
> *de lo spirito umano su la morta*
> *materie e su la torpida ignoranza.**

and it was all a pæan of praise to Flight, by which he was enthralled, as other people then were by motoring. But he knew little about machines and nothing about piloting. When Icarus asks Daedalus to tie on his wings, and prepares to rise, he first prays "to the soul of the world, the venerated Unknown," with uncanny foreboding:

> *...s'è destin ch'io cada*
> *fa che il mio sangue germini nel tempo*
> *e risfavilli in ciascuna era.†*

and prophetically too he embraces Phaedra:

> *...E' il primo*
> *bacio, e l'ultimo forse. Ma l'amore*

* (In Ruth Draper's translations)... the rising of a new and fecund age intent upon victories of the human spirit over dead matter and over dull ignorance.

† (Idem)... if it is destined that I fall, grant that my blood be for ever fertile and shine again in every age.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

o si compia o si sfiori come un sogno,
fatto è d'eterno, e un solo istante e tutta
la vita uguali sono innanzi a Amore.‡

That year, 1928, *Icaro* was chosen as the prize poem for the Olympic Games. Lauro had written it in a week, quickly, but it has some very good lines. Apart from his Greek translations he had translated Frazer's *Golden Bough* into Italian. Now he was busy editing a *Golden Book of Italian Verse* for the Oxford University Press, to which George Macaulay Trevelyan wrote a preface.

In 1930 he came home to Italy on leave. I did not see him then. The first I knew of what he had been doing that summer in New York came through an old and common friend, Mario Vinciguerra, who is now President of the Society of Authors in Italy, and was then already the author of some remarkable literary studies of 19th-century Europe. Lauro had been writing half a dozen leaflets in the name of what he called a "National Alliance," an alliance which he believed could exist between all those loyal to Monarchy and to Catholic Action, and anyone else anxious to see the end of Fascism. On leave in Italy Lauro duplicated some 600 copies of his leaflets and posted them to various addresses up and down the peninsula, asking those who received them to make ten copies and post them on to friends. The National Alliance would grow if only people would snowball the manifestos, he believed. The only clandestine papers then circulating in Italy were the Communist *Unità* and occasionally a copy of the Socialist *Avanti*, both in much reduced format. *Giustizia e Libertà*, the organ of Carlo Rosselli, was beginning to cross the frontier, for Rosselli had only just escaped from internment on the island of Lipari. The Italian Communist Executive (all excepting Togliatti, already in Russia) had been caught and sentenced to decades of imprisonment by the Special Tribunal for the Defence of the State (a political tribunal set up by the régime) in 1929. I had attended that trial and many other summary ones in that small sombre court. All organised opposition inside Italy seemed in abeyance, even if some 10,000 persons were yet to appear before that Fascist Tribunal. Their actions, like those of Lauro's friends, were single, swift, seemingly pointless, and very risky. Alone the Catholic Action cadres met throughout the dictatorship, even after severe restrictions were imposed on their premises and organisations. That is the background against which the *Alleanza Nazionale* must be seen. It too ran the risk of ending up in front of the dreaded Special Tribunal, whose sentences were rarely below ten years' imprisonment.

‡ (Idem) It is the first kiss and perhaps the last. But love whether it is fulfilled or fades like a dream, is made of the eternal, and one sole instant and all of life are equal before love.

WHEN Lauro returned to New York that summer of 1930, Mario Vinciguerra and a journalist called Renzo Rendi took over the work in Rome. Lauro's mother, Lilian de Bosis, kept the duplicating machine under her mattress in the large top flat at 66 Via Due Macelli, just off the Piazza di Spagna, where all the de Bosis children had been born and had spent their childhood and had played on a great roof terrace overlooking the city.

Even supposing all the 600 recipients of the leaflets had snowballed them on, the movement would so far only number the 600 and the three in Rome. A tiny beginning. Disaster overtook the work almost immediately. The letters were being posted in the Vatican City. Outside, the Italian police kept watch—informed by the Vatican Police? We shall never know. It is probable that they worked hand in glove. Most police forces do.

With Vinciguerra arrested and not too well treated, Rendi was next arrested, and then the police went to the de Bosis flat and found the duplicator. The white-haired old lady was taken away to a prison hospital.

All this happened in the last days of November, 1930. A trial in front of the Special Tribunal was fixed for mid-December. Just before the day of the trial I found out the address of the prison hospital, and thinking to express in however poor a way some heartfelt sympathy with the liberal old American

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lady, I went there with a bunch of early spring flowers. A policeman stood outside her door. I explained that I had nothing to say: only the flowers to leave. He walked in with me. She was unexplainably laconic and unresponsive and I felt I had done the wrong thing, but I did not know why, until a few days later in court.

For the first time all my colleagues of the Foreign Press in Rome applied for tickets and turned up. None had ever attended the previous trials. These prisoners were known abroad. The trial was terribly brief. Signora de Bosis was released on the strength of a letter she had addressed to Mussolini personally, asking pardon for her son Lauro, to whom she referred as "a bird who fell early out of the nest." She had acted, I was later told, on her lawyer's advice to safeguard her other children's jobs and her many grandchildren's future. Vinciguerra and Rendi were ferociously sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment. An amnesty seven years later freed them. Prison had broken Rendi's spirit and he died soon after his release, leaving a Swiss-born wife and twins to mourn him. Vinciguerra, by dint of great self-discipline, survived the months of solitary confinement, and lived to fight another day and to take a valiant journalistic part in the liberation struggle.

One of the worst moments in that court was the reading by the Public Prosecutor of a letter of the previous autumn alleged to have been written by Lauro de Bosis to the Italian Ambassador in Washington applying for a post in the Casa Italiana and protesting his loyalty to the Fascist régime. Coming almost immediately after the reading of his mother's letter, it certainly achieved the desired effect among the foreign correspondents gathered there: were not all these conspirators double-crossing each other? The *New York Times* poured contumely on the whole case. Already the world's press worshipped at the shrine of success. Failure would not detain them. The Catholics (always of primary importance in Italy) were not interested in this old Protestant pastor's daughter and her unbaptised son.

I CONFESS that at the time I thought the letter to the Ambassador had been concocted, and I felt a great distress at the other letter to Mussolini, although I realised that such a situation for an old lady with many children and grandchildren could not be judged by any but a human standard. She had loved her youngest son and had hidden the duplicator for his sake.

The letter to the Ambassador existed—exactly as it had been read out. I found that out when a chance encounter brought me further into the whole matter.

In the spring of 1931 the *Manchester Guardian* decided that the conditions of censorship in Italy and the general behaviour of the régime did not warrant the keeping of a correspondent in Rome, and none was appointed again, until I returned to Rome in 1944. But in July, 1931, on a London tube platform, I suddenly saw Lauro de Bosis. He was like a man with a single mission in life, and in great haste. We went to a teashop and there he said he had read my messages about the trial in the *Guardian* and in a New York paper. Yes, he had written that letter to the Ambassador, as a means to an end, for New York was a good place to work from. He did not mind the outrageous things said about him. He minded desperately that his friends were in prison and that he was free. He had talked for hours to Ruth about it and had decided that he must go back to Italy. She had discouraged him, saying that it would mean instant arrest and a sentence stiffer than Vinciguerra's and Rendi's. So he had devised another course. He would fly to Rome and shower new *Alleanza* leaflets on the capital. He would learn to fly.

He said he had learnt at Hendon. He had had seven hours' solo flying and then, from the one source that would have done everything possible to protect his life, had come the gift he was longing for—a small aeroplane. Early in July he had set off with his load of leaflets, only to crash-land in Corsica soon after taking off. He fled, and left the damaged plane there. Now he was like a dedicated man—intent on another attempt. Ruth Draper had provided him with another plane.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

No anti-Fascist organisation could have afforded these two expeditions. They cost over £15,000, he said. Next day he drove out to a small printer near Hendon to see the proofs of his new leaflets, 500,000 of them on the thinnest India paper, beautifully printed. They invited dissenters to a high order of discipline:

Never be present at any Fascist ceremony.
Never buy a newspaper; they contain only lies.
Never smoke. Tobacco yields more than 3,000 million lire annually to Fascism; enough to pay all its assassins.
Spread any true information you possess. The truth is always anti-Fascist.

The dictatorship was nearly ten years old. I had lived the last four years under it and I certainly felt little hope of its breakdown. These leaflets would, under the circumstances, simply remind anyone who picked them up that one man disbelieved all the fatuous prose in the Italian papers, and that he was risking his life to say so.

Lauro desperately wanted someone to take the leaflets to Paris. He did not want to be caught with them so early in the proceedings. Ruth was already in Paris. Not being attached to any newspaper now, nor responsible to anyone except myself, I took the suitcase across the Channel, for I was to join a friend from Oxford days, an American girl, in Paris, and we were shortly to go to Shanghai together.

The last time I saw Lauro was the day he came round to my friend's house in the Rue de Vaugirard with Professor Salvemini and Ruth Draper, and he read to us from an old copy of the *Nouvelle Revue Française* passages from Gide's "Prometheus." He asked if Ruth could stay with me while he was "over Rome." My friend was away, and on 2nd October, Ruth came to stay.

CERTAIN vigils one will never forget. These two nights were of that kind. Ruth's full dilemma was traced and re-traced in all its tragic details. She questioned her wisdom in backing the other flight and now this one. As in all real tragedy, the alternatives were equally perilous. To deny Lauro the means for his expedition, once he had, with what might be called d'Annunzian impetus, conceived it, was to face the possibility of losing him on some even more desperate enterprise. (D'Annunzio in 1918 had showered the first leaflets ever to come from an aeroplane over Vienna, bidding the Austrians surrender.) But for Ruth to grant the means for this expedition was not going to bring any startling results and might be the end of Lauro. I remember taking but one decision: not to hold out any false hope. For the rest I tried to engage her attention as best I could.

We played the gramophone. We walked in the nearby Luxembourg Gardens, talking, talking all the way. I even read aloud though I am not much good at it. Meals appeared punctually and a semblance of eating was made.

At lunchtime on 3rd October Lauro rang her up from Marignan airport, near Marseilles. He took flight that Saturday afternoon. He reached Rome at six p.m. According to eye-witness accounts he showered his leaflets right down the Corso, all over Piazza Colonna, and then in Piazza Venezia, at the moment when people were coming out of the cinemas and the open-air cafés were full. The police rushed to seize the slips of India paper, yet many were taken home. For twenty minutes he zig-zagged over the city dropping his tissue slips in other places. Inevitably, for those who read the slips, this was both their first and their last acquaintance with the *Alleanza Nazionale*, for the trials at the Special Tribunal were rarely reported in the Fascist Press and then often in tiny print, or with contumely. The recent trial had passed almost unnoticed among the great mass of people.

Lauro was to ring up from Marignan after his return, which might be any time up to midnight. His little machine only travelled at 80 m.p.h. We sat up all night. Ruth, as any great actress might, found comfort from time to time in going through the actions of muted tragedy, so familiar to those who have seen her on the stage. As quickly she would lapse into uncontrollable grief. It was hard to know which was the human being and

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

which the artist, yet they were separate. Dawn, a grey October Sunday, found us still talking of Italy, of Lauro, of his last document which he had left with her for publication. It appeared in *The Times* on 14th October, after every hope of finding him had vanished, under the title of *Story of my Death*. It is a text one cannot quarrel with, even to-day. In 1931 it was remarkable, for Mussolini was admired by very many readers of *The Times*. Lauro himself had been a late but a passionate convert to the view that "there is no prospect of Fascism becoming merciful and human without its ceasing to exist," as he put it. Many Italians and all but a tenacious minority of Germans took years to find that out.

On Sunday morning we rang up Marignan. Not then, nor at any time, was any signal received of a plane down in the sea. The Italian Air Force was alerted: planes did go up, but they never contacted the intruder.

In one matter I think Professor Prezzolini was right, that Lauro also wanted to prove by his death, "the sincerity of his anti-Fascist faith." Many people, then, thought of the enterprise as a "lark." It was not. That was why we helped him.

There was something as tragically amateur about the whole thing, as there was about the recent uprisings in Hungary. These are the things that friends do together, from a number of motives, of which affection is a vital one, and the true welfare of a people is another. It should not be necessary for old ladies like Lilian de Bosis and artists like Ruth Draper to become so mightily involved in a conspiratorial web, yet it was not stupidity or blind passion which led them into it. Their instinct told them that Lauro was, however clumsily, fighting in a proper cause. The acts of free men—of men who want to be free—will always appear futile to many, but in such acts resides the kind of flame which keeps the human spirit alive, at moments when a blanket of tyranny and materialism seems to be suffocating it.

That Sunday afternoon of 4th October, 1931, Ruth Draper went to friends and the next day to England. I did not see her again for fourteen years. People told me she was acting more finely than ever. I had only seen her perform once, long before I first met her. It would have seemed flippant, after those two terrible vigils, to wish to attend one of her performances again. Being in New York in 1945 for a few days, I visited her. As I was returning to Italy she asked me to take a consignment of warm clothes to Signora de Bosis, now well on in her eighties. The war had cut them off for six years, but from 1946 Ruth resumed her annual pilgrimage to Italy and to Lauro's mother, until she died four years ago.

Ruth Draper died in her sleep a year ago, in New York. She left a godson who bears the name Timothy Lauro, as a memory of those very days a quarter of a century ago, when this young man was born. And he, I know, has seen the little statue on the Janiculum.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Tommaso Landolfi

Gogol's Wife

A Story

AT this point, confronted with the whole complicated affair of Nikolai Vassilevitch's wife, I am overcome by hesitation. Have I any right to disclose something which is unknown to the whole world, which my unforgettable friend himself kept hidden from the world (and he had his reasons), and which I am sure will give rise to all sorts of malicious and stupid misunderstandings? Something, moreover, which will very probably offend the sensibilities of all sorts of base, hypocritical people, and indeed, I must admit, possibly of some honest people too, if there are any left? And finally, have I any right to disclose something before which my own spirit recoils, and even tends towards a more or less open disapproval?

But the fact remains that, as a biographer, I have certain firm obligations. Believing as I do that every bit of information about so lofty a genius will turn out to be of value to us and to future generations, I cannot wish to conceal something which in any case has no hope of being judged fairly and wisely until the end of time. Moreover, what right have we to condemn? Is it given to us to know, not only what intimate needs, but even what higher and wider ends may have been served by those very deeds of a lofty genius which perchance may appear to us vile? No, indeed, for we understand so little of these privileged natures. "It is true," a great man once said, "that I also have to pee, but for quite different reasons."

But without more ado I will come to what I know beyond doubt, and can prove beyond question, about this controversial matter, which will now—I dare to hope—no longer be so. I will not trouble to recapitulate what is already known of it, since I do not think this should be necessary at the present stage of development of Gogol studies.

Let me say it at once: Nikolai Vassilevitch's wife was not a woman. Nor was she any sort of human being, nor indeed any sort of living creature at all, whether animal or vegetable (although something of the sort has sometimes been hinted). She was quite simply a balloon. Yes, a balloon; and this will explain the perplexity, or even indignation, of certain biographers who were also the personal friends of the Master, and who complained that, although they often went to his house, they had never seen her and had "never even heard her voice." From this they deduced all sorts of dark and disgraceful complications; yes, and criminal ones too. No, sirs; everything is always simpler than it appears. You did not hear her voice simply because she could not speak, or to be more exact, she could only speak in certain conditions, as we shall see. And it was always, except once, in tête-à-tête with Nikolai Vassilevitch. So let us not waste time with any cheap or empty refutations but let us

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

come at once to as exact and complete a description as possible of the being or object in question.

GOGOL'S so-called wife was, therefore, an ordinary dummy of thick rubber, naked at all seasons, buff in tint, or as is more commonly said, flesh-coloured. But since women's skins are not all of the same colour, I should specify that in this case it was mainly a question of a light-coloured, polished skin, like that of certain brunettes. It, or she, was, it is hardly necessary to add, of feminine sex. Perhaps I should say at once that she was capable of very wide alterations of her attributes without, of course, being able to alter her sex itself. Nevertheless, she certainly could sometimes appear to be thin, with hardly any breasts and with narrow hips more like a young lad than a woman, and at other times to be excessively well-endowed or—let us not mince matters—fat. Moreover, she often changed the colour of her hair, both on her head and elsewhere on her body, though not necessarily at the same time. She could also seem to change in all sorts of other tiny particulars, such as the position of the moles, the vitality of the mucous membranes, and so forth. She could even to a certain extent change the very colour of her skin. One is faced with the necessity of asking oneself who she really was, or whether it would be proper to speak of a single "person"—and in fact we shall see that it would be imprudent to press this point.

The cause of these changes, as my readers will already have understood, was nothing else but the will of Nikolai Vassilevitch himself. He would inflate her to a greater or lesser degree, would change her wig and her other tufts of hair, would grease her with ointments of his own, and touch her up in various ways so as to obtain more or less the type of woman which suited him at that day or moment. Following the natural inclinations of his fancy, he even amused himself sometimes by producing grotesque or monstrous forms; as will be readily understood, she became deformed when inflated beyond a certain point and also if she remained below a certain pressure.

But Gogol soon tired of these experiments, which he held to be "after all, not very respectful" to his wife, whom he loved in his own way—however inscrutable it may remain to us. He loved her, but which of these incarnations, we may ask ourselves, did he love? Alas, I have already indicated that the end of the present account will furnish some sort of an answer. Alas, how can I have stated above that it was Nikolai Vassilevitch's will which ruled that woman? In a certain sense, yes, it is true; but it is equally certain that she soon became no longer his slave but his tyrant. And here yawns the abyss, or if you prefer it, the Jaws of Tartarus. But let us not anticipate.

I have already said that Gogol obtained with his manipulations *more or less* the type of woman which he needed from time to time. I should add that when, in rare cases, the form he obtained perfectly incarnated that which he desired, Nikolai Vassilevitch fell in love with it "exclusively," as he said in his own words, and that this was enough to render "her" stable for a certain time, that is to say, until he fell out of love with "her." Nevertheless, I counted no more than three or four of these violent passions—or, as I suppose they would be called to-day, infatuations—in the life (dare I say in the conjugal life?) of the great writer. It will be convenient to add here that a few years after what one may call his marriage, Gogol had even given a name to his wife. It was Caracas, which is, unless I am mistaken, the capital of Venezuela. I have never been able to discover the reason for this choice: great minds are so capricious!

SPEAKING only of her normal appearance: Caracas was what is called a fine woman; that is, well built and proportioned in every part. As I said above, she had every smallest attribute of her sex properly disposed in the proper location. Particularly worthy of attention were her genital organs (if the adjective is permissible in such a context). They were formed by means of ingenious

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

folds in the rubber. Nothing was forgotten, and their operation was rendered easy by various devices, as well as by the internal pressure of the air.

Caracas also had a skeleton, even though a rudimentary one. Perhaps it was made of whalebone. Special care had been devoted to the construction of the thoracic cage, of the pelvic basin, and of the cranium. The first two systems were more or less visible in accordance with the thickness of the fatty layer, if I may so describe it, which covered them. It is a great pity, I may add in passing, that Gogol never let me know the name of the creator of such a fine piece of work. There was an obstinacy in his refusal which was never quite clear to me.

Nikolai Vassilevitch blew his wife up through the anal sphincter with a pump of his own invention, rather like those which you hold down with your two feet and which are used to-day in all sorts of mechanical workshops. Situated in the anus was a little one-way valve, or whatever the correct technical description would be, like the mitral valve of the heart, which, once the body was inflated, allowed more air to come in but none to go out. To deflate, one unscrewed a stopper in the mouth, at the back of the throat.

And that, I think, exhausts the description of the most noteworthy peculiarities of this being. Unless perhaps I should mention the splendid rows of white teeth which adorned her mouth and the dark eyes which, in spite of their immobility, perfectly simulated life. Did I say simulate? Good heavens, simulate is not the word! Nothing seems to be the word, when one is speaking of Caracas! Even these eyes could undergo a change of colour, by means of a special process to which, since it was long and tiresome, Gogol seldom had recourse. Finally, I should speak of her voice, which it was only once given to me to hear. But I cannot do that without going more fully into the relationship between husband and wife, and in this I shall no longer be able to answer to the truth of everything with absolute certitude. On my conscience I could not; so confused, both in itself and in my memory, is that which I now have to tell.

Here, then, as they occur to me, are some of my memories.

THE first and, as I said, the last time I ever heard Caracas speak to Nikolai Vassilevitch was one evening when we were absolutely alone. We were in the room where the woman, if I may be allowed the expression, lived. Entrance to this room was strictly forbidden to everybody. It was furnished more or less in the oriental manner, had no windows, and was situated in the most inaccessible part of the house. I did know that she could talk, but Gogol had never explained to me the circumstances under which this happened. There were, of course, only the two of us, or three, in there. Nikolai Vassilevitch and I were drinking vodka and discussing Butkov's novel. I remember that we left this topic, and he was maintaining the necessity for radical reforms in the laws of inheritance. We had almost forgotten her. It was then that, with a husky and submissive voice, like Venus on the nuptial couch, she said point-blank: "I want to go poo poo." I jumped, thinking I had misheard, and looked across at her. She was sitting on a pile of cushions against the wall; that day she was a soft, blonde beauty, rather well-covered. Her expression seemed commingled of shrewdness and slyness, childishness and irresponsibility. As for Gogol, he blushed violently and, leaping on her, stuck two fingers down her throat. She immediately began to shrink and, it must be admitted, to turn pale; she took on once again that lost and astonished air which was especially hers, and was in the end reduced to no more than a flabby skin on a perfunctory bony armature. Moreover, since for practical reasons, which will readily be divined, she had an extraordinarily flexible backbone, she folded up almost in two, and for the rest of the evening she looked up at us from where she had slithered to the floor, in utter abjection. All Gogol said was: "She only does it for a joke, or to annoy me; because as a matter of fact she does not have such needs." In the presence

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of other people, that is to say of me, he generally made a point of treating her with a certain disdain.

We went on drinking and talking, but Nikolai Vassilevitch seemed very much disturbed and absent in spirit. Once he suddenly interrupted what he was saying, seized my hand in his, and burst into tears. "What can I do now?" he exclaimed. "You understand, Foma Paskalovitch, that I loved her?" It is necessary to point out that it was impossible, except by a miracle, ever to repeat any of Caracas'. forms. She was, in short, a fresh creation every time, and it would have been wasted effort to seek to find again the exact proportions, the exact pressure, and so forth, of a former Caracas. Therefore the plumpish blonde in question was lost to Gogol from that time forth for ever; this was in fact the tragic end of one of those few loves of Nikolai Vassilevitch, which I described above. He gave me no explanation; he sadly rejected my proffered comfort, and that evening we parted early. But his heart had been laid bare to me in that outburst. He was no longer so reticent with me, and soon had hardly any secrets left. And this, I may say in parenthesis, caused me very great pride.

IT SEEMS that things had gone well for the "couple" at the beginning of their life together. Nikolai Vassilevitch had been content with Caracas, and slept regularly with her in the same bed. Moreover, he continued to observe this custom till the end, saying with a timid smile that no companion could be quieter or less importunate than she. But I soon began to doubt this, especially judging by the state he was sometimes in when he woke up. Then, after several years, their relationship began strangely to deteriorate.

All this, let it be said once and for all, is no more than a schematic attempt at an explanation. About that time the woman actually began to show signs of independence or, as one might say, of autonomy. Nikolai Vassilevitch had the extraordinary impression that she was acquiring a personality of her own, indecipherable perhaps, but still distinct from his, and one which as it were slipped through his fingers. It is certain that some sort of continuity was established between each of her appearances; between all those brunettes, those blondes, those redheads and auburn-headed girls, between those plump, those slim, those dusky or snowy or golden beauties, there was a certain something in common. At the beginning of this chapter I cast some doubt on the propriety of considering Caracas as a unitary personality; nevertheless I myself could not quite, whenever I saw her, free myself of the impression that, however unheard of it may seem, this was fundamentally the same woman. And it may be that this was why Gogol felt he had to give her a name.

An attempt to establish in what precisely subsisted the common attributes of the different forms would be quite another thing. Perhaps it was no more and no less than the creative afflatus of Nikolai Vassilevitch himself. But no, it would have been too singular and strange if he had been so much divided off from himself, so much averse to himself. Because, let it be said at once, whoever she was in fact, Caracas was a disturbing presence and even, it is better to be quite clear, a hostile one. Even so, neither Gogol nor I ever succeeded in formulating a remotely tenable hypothesis as to her true nature; when I say formulate, I mean in terms which should be at once rational and accessible to all. But I cannot pass over an extraordinary event which took place at this time.

Caracas fell ill of a shameful disease; or rather Gogol did; and he was not then having, nor had he ever had, any contact with other women. I will not even try to describe how this happened, or where the filthy complaint came from; all I know is that it happened. And that my great, unhappy friend would say to me: "So, Foma Paskalovitch, you see what lay at the heart of Caracas; it was the spirit of syphilis." Sometimes he would even blame himself in a quite absurd manner; he was always prone to self-accusation. This incident was above all a real catastrophe as far as the already obscure relationship between husband and wife, and the hostile feelings of Nikolai Vassilevitch him-

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

self, were concerned. He was compelled to undergo long-drawn-out and painful treatment—the treatment of those days—and the situation was aggravated by the fact that the disease in the woman did not seem to be easily curable. I must add that Gogol deluded himself for some time that, by blowing his wife up and down and furnishing her with the most widely divergent aspects, he could obtain a woman immune from the contagion, but he was forced to desist when no results were forthcoming.

I shall be brief, seeking not to tire my readers, and also because what I remember seems to become more and more confused. I shall therefore hasten to the tragic conclusion. As to this last, however, let there be no mistake. I must once again make it clear that I am very sure of my ground. I was an eye witness. Would that I had not been!

THE years went by. Nikolai Vassilevitch's distaste for his wife became stronger, though his love for her did not show any signs of diminishing. Towards the end, aversion and attachment struggled so fiercely with each other in his heart that he became quite stricken, almost broken up. His restless eyes, which habitually assumed so many different expressions and sometimes spoke so sweetly to the heart of his interlocutor, now almost always shone with a fevered light, as if he were under the effect of a drug. The strangest impulses arose in him, accompanied by the most senseless fears. He spoke to me of Caracas more and more often, accusing her of unthinkable and amazing things. In these regions I could not follow him, since I had but a sketchy acquaintance with his wife, and hardly any intimacy, or none at all; and above all since my sensibility was so limited compared with his. I shall accordingly restrict myself to reporting some of his accusations, without reference to my personal impressions.

"Believe it or not, Foma Paskalovitch," he would, for example, often say to me: "Believe it or not, *she's ageing*!" Then, unspeakably moved, he would, as was his way, take my hands in his. He also accused Caracas of giving herself up to solitary pleasures, which he had expressly forbidden. He even went so far as to charge her with betraying him, but the things he said became so extremely obscure that I must excuse myself from any further account of them.

One thing that appears certain is that towards the end Caracas, whether aged or not, had turned into a bitter creature, querulous, hypocritical, and subject to religious excess. I do not exclude the possibility that she may have had an influence on Gogol's moral position during the last period of his life, a position which is sufficiently well known. In any case, the tragic climax came one night quite unexpectedly when Nikolai Vassilevitch and I were celebrating his silver wedding; one of the last evenings we were to spend together. I neither can nor should attempt to set down what it was that led to his decision, at a time when to all appearances he was resigned to tolerating his consort. I know not what new events had taken place that day. I shall confine myself to the facts; my readers must make what they can of them.

That evening Nikolai Vassilevitch was unusually agitated. His distaste for Caracas seemed to have reached an unprecedented intensity. The famous "pyre of vanities"—that is to say, the burning of his manuscripts—had already taken place; I should not like to say whether or not at the instigation of his wife. His state of mind had been further inflamed by other causes. As to his physical condition; this was ever more pitiful, and strengthened my impression that he took drugs. All the same, he began to talk in a more or less normal way about Belinsky, who was giving him some trouble with his attacks on the *Selected Correspondence*. Then suddenly, tears rising to his eyes, he interrupted himself and cried out: "No. No. It's too much, too much. I can't go on any longer," as well as other obscure and disconnected phrases which he would not clarify. He seemed, moreover, to be talking to himself. He wrung his hands, shook his head, got up, and sat down again after having taken four or five anxious steps round the room. When Caracas appeared, or rather when we went

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in to her later in the evening in her oriental chamber, he controlled himself no longer and began to behave like an old man, if I may so express myself, in his second childhood, quite giving way to his absurd impulses. For instance, he kept nudging me and winking and senselessly repeating: "There she is, Foma Paskalovitch; there she is!" Meanwhile she seemed to look up at us with a disdainful attention. But behind these "mannerisms" one could feel in him a real repugnance, a repugnance which had, I suppose, now reached the limits of the endurable. Indeed . . .

AFTER a certain time Nikolai Vassilevitch seemed to pluck up courage. He burst into tears, but somehow they were more manly tears. He wrung his hands again, seized mine in his, walked up and down, muttering: "That's enough! We can't have any more of this. This is an unheard of thing. How can such a thing be happening to me? How can a man be expected to put up with *this*?" and so forth. He then leapt furiously upon the pump, the existence of which he seemed just to have remembered, and, with it in his hand, dashed like a whirlwind to Caracas. He inserted the tube in her anus and began to inflate her. . . . Weeping the while, he shouted like one possessed: "Oh, how I love her, how I love her, my poor, poor darling! . . . But she's going to burst! Unhappy Caracas, most pitiable of God's creatures! But die she must!" And so on, alternating one with another.

Caracas swelled up. Nikolai Vassilevitch sweated, wept, and pumped. I wished to stop him but, I know not why, I had not the courage. She began to become deformed, and shortly assumed the most monstrous aspect; and yet she had not given any signs of alarm, she was used to these jokes. But when she began to feel unbearably full, or perhaps when Nikolai Vassilevitch's intentions became plain to her, she took on an expression of, I should say, bestial amazement, even a little beseeching, but still without losing that disdainful look. She was afraid, she was even committing herself to his mercy, but still she could not believe in the immediate approach of her fate, she could not believe in the frightful audacity of her husband. He, moreover, could not see her face because he was behind her. But I looked at her with fascination, and did not move a finger. At last the internal pressure came through the fragile bones at the base of her skull, and printed on her face an indescribable rictus. Her belly, her thighs, her hips, her breasts, and what I could see of her buttocks had swollen to incredible proportions. All of a sudden she belched, and gave a long hissing groan; both these phenomena one could, if one wished, explain by the above-mentioned increase in pressure, which had suddenly forced a way out through the valve in her throat. Lastly, her eyes bulged frantically, threatening to jump out of their sockets. Her ribs flared wide apart and were no longer attached to the sternum, and she resembled at all points a python while it digests a donkey. A donkey, do I say? An ox! An elephant! At this point I believed her already dead, but Nikolai Vassilevitch, sweating, weeping, and repeating: "My dearest! My beloved! My best!" continued to pump.

She went off unexpectedly and, as it were, all of a piece. That is to say it was not one part of her skin which gave way and the rest which followed, but her whole surface at the same instant. She scattered in the air. The pieces fell more or less slowly, according to their size, which was in no case above a very restricted one. I distinctly remember a piece of her cheek, with some lip attached, hanging on the corner of the mantelpiece. Nikolai Vassilevitch stared at me like a madman. Then he pulled himself together and, once more with furious determination, he began carefully to collect those poor rags which once had been the shining skin of Caracas, and all of her. "Good-bye, Caracas," I thought I heard him murmur; "good-bye! You were too pitiable!" And then suddenly and quite audibly: "The fire! The fire! She too must end up in the fire." He crossed himself, with his left hand, of course. Then, when he had picked up all those shrivelled rags, even

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

climbing on the furniture so as not to miss any, he threw them straight on the fire in the hearth, where they began to burn slowly and with an excessively unpleasant smell. Nikolai Vassilevitch, like all Russians, had a passion for throwing important things in the fire.

He, red in the face, with an inexpressible look of despair, and yet of sinister triumph too, gazed on the pyre of those miserable remains. He had seized my arm, and was squeezing it convulsively. But those traces of what had once been a being were hardly well alight when he seemed yet again to pull himself together, as if he were suddenly remembering something or taking a painful decision. In one bound he was out of the room. A few seconds later I heard him speaking to me through the door in a broken, plaintive voice: "Foma Paskalovitch, I want you to promise not to look. *Golubchik*, promise not to look at me when I come in." I don't know what I answered, or whether I tried to reassure him in any way. But he insisted, and I had to promise to hide my face against the wall and only turn round when he said, as if he'd been a child. The door then opened violently and Nikolai Vassilevitch burst into the room and ran to the fireplace.

And here I must confess my weakness, though I consider it justified by the extraordinary circumstances. I looked round before Nikolai Vassilevitch told me I could; it was stronger than me. I was just in time to see him carrying something in his arms, something which he threw on the fire with all the rest, so that it suddenly flared up. At that, since the desire to *see* had entirely mastered every other desire in me, I dashed to the fireplace. But Nikolai Vassilevitch placed himself between me and it and pushed me back with a strength of which I had not believed him capable. Meanwhile the object was burning and giving off clouds of smoke. And before he showed any sign of calming down there was nothing left but a heap of silent ashes.

In point of fact, the true reason why I wished to see was because I had already glimpsed. But it was only a glimpse, and perhaps I should not allow myself to introduce even the slightest element of uncertainty into this true story. And yet, an eye-witness account is not complete without a mention of that which the witness knows with less than complete certainty. To cut a long story short, that something was a baby. Not a flesh and blood baby, of course, but more something in the line of a rubber doll or a model. Something, in short, which to judge by its appearance, could have been called *Caracas' son*.

Was I mad too? That I do not know, but I do know that this was what I saw, not clearly, but with my own eyes. And I wonder why it was that when I was writing this just now I didn't mention that when Nikolai Vassilevitch came back into the room he was muttering between his clenched teeth: "Him too! Him too!"

And that is the sum of my knowledge of Nikolai Vassilevitch's wife. In the next chapter I shall tell what happened to him afterwards, and that will be the last chapter of his life. But to give an interpretation of his feelings for his wife, or indeed for anything, is quite another and more difficult matter, though I have attempted it elsewhere in this volume, and refer the reader to that modest effort. I hope I have thrown sufficient light on a most controversial question and that I have unveiled the mystery, if not of Gogol, then at least of his wife. In the course of this I have implicitly given the lie to the insensate accusation that he ill-treated or even beat his wife, as well as to other like absurdities. And what else can be the goal of a humble biographer such as the present writer but to serve the memory of that lofty genius who is the object of his study?

(Translated by Wayland Young)

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Daniel Bell

The Capitalism of the Proletariat?

American Trade Unionism To-day

TRADE UNIONISM, said George Bernard Shaw, is the capitalism of the proletariat. Like all such epigrams, it is a half-truth, calculated to irritate the people who believe in the other half. American trade unionism would seem to embody Shaw's description, but in fact it only half-embodies it—at most. True, the American labour leader will mock socialism and uphold capitalism; yet he has built the most aggressive trade union movement in the world—and one, moreover, that has larger interests than mere economic gain. Abroad, the European Marxist hears the labour leader praise the free enterprise system as the most successful method yet devised for a worker to obtain a fair, and rising share, of the country's wealth; within the U.S., the American businessman listens to the labour leader denouncing him in wild and often reckless rhetoric as a greedy profiteer, monopolist, and exploiter. How reconcile these contradictions? One U.S. labour leader sought to do so in these terms: *to* your wife, he said, you talk one way; *about* your wife, you talk another. Very clever; but, one might add, another half-truth—at most.

William James once said that whenever you meet a contradiction you must make a distinction, for people use the same words but mean two different things. One way out of this seeming contradiction, therefore, is to see American trade unionism as existing in two contexts, as a *social movement* and as an economic force (*market unionism*), and accordingly playing a different rôle in each. The social movement is an ideological conception, shaped by intellectuals, which sees labour as part of an historical trend that challenges the established order. Market unionism, on the other hand, is an economic conception, a delimiting of rôle and function, imposed by the realities of the specific industrial environment in which the union operates.

Any labour movement finds itself subject to all the ideological pressures of the "left," whether social, communist, or syndicalist. After all, it is in the name of the workers that these social movements proclaim their slogans; and the labour movement itself is one of the chief vehicles of social change. But in the U.S., the image of trade unionism as a social movement took a unique course, as plotted in the theory—inspired largely by the "Wisconsin school" of John R. Commons and Selig Perlman—of "Labourism." The theory argues that the trade union movement, although fashioned ideologically, has a different source of cohesion from the radical movement—i.e., the limited, day-to-day, expectation of social improvement. By its concentration on the specific issues at hand, it must necessarily reject the far-flung socialist and radical ideologies; unlike them, it is both *in* the world and *of* the world. In its operation, it can indeed become a force for social change, but only by "sharing" power rather than seeking the radical transformation of society. This sharing of power takes place both in the factory—through bargaining on wages and working conditions, and sometimes on pro-

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

duction standards—and in the larger society, through seeking legislation for the increased welfare of the worker.

"Labourism" is the dominant ideology—to the extent that there is one—of the American labour movement. In the past it has been the conservative defence of the unions against the recriminations of the radicals; it was a rationalisation of the purely economic rôle of the unions. Yet it has come to have a political force of its own, as well. Pale ideology though it is, it still conceives of unionism as a social movement, and it still conceives of itself as being opposed to the employer class as a whole. "Labourism" is associated usually with the New Deal and Fair Deal, and with the left-wing of the Democratic party. It calls for improved social-welfare benefits, for a tax programme which falls mostly on the wealthy, and it cries out incessantly against "monopolies."

But here lies an anomaly and the source of a contradiction; for *market unionism*, collective-bargaining unionism, can only exist in monopoly situations—a monopoly created either by the employers or by the unions. In fact, the only industries in the U.S. where unionism is strong to-day are those where a monopoly situation—industry- or union-created—exists.

THE reason is fairly simple. The chief purpose of market unionism is to eliminate wages as a factor in competition. Where an industry is only partially unionised, and wages therefore can be utilised as a competitive lever, a union must either impose a monopoly or go under; the erosion of the American textile unions is a case in point.

The pattern of monopoly follows that of the different markets. In oligopolistic markets —i.e., in industries dominated by a few giant firms—the unions eliminate wages as a competitive factor by "pattern bargaining," that is, by imposing the wage agreement on all firms in the industry. While, theoretically, bargaining is still done with individual firms, in practice (as is seen in the case of steel) the agreement is industry-wide. In the highly competitive or small-unit-size fields, the unions have stepped in and provided a monopoly structure to the market, limiting the entry of firms into the industry, establishing price-lines, etc. This has been true most notably in the coal industry, in the garment industry, and in the construction trades.

In coal, where the industry could not do it itself, the miners' union has enforced a basic price floor for the entire industry. This has been done in various ways: through legislative price-fixing, as in the Guffey Coal act of the first years of the New Deal; outright production-restriction schemes, as in Pennsylvania, which limit the tonnage of anthracite that can be mined in the state; by keeping the mines open only three days a week; by staggered strikes in order to reduce coal surpluses, etc.

The garment unions have established a fixed series of price lines, or grades, for men's clothing and women's dresses, thus bringing order out of chaotic competition. By limiting the number of contractors who can sew and finish dresses for a single manufacturer, and by stopping firms from moving out of a fixed geographical area, the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union has been able to restrict the number of firms in the industry and to police the market.

The most elaborate form of market stabilisation exists in the construction trades. The power of the unions resides in the fact that they serve as a work contractor, i.e., as the labour-force recruiting agent, for the employer. Few of the firms that bid on the heavy construction work (dams, power stations, roads, factories, atomic installation, etc.) maintain a permanent labour force; nor do they know the local labour market; they rely on the union to supply experienced and skilled men. Even the small home builder needs the union to provide stability. The major factor in the cost of each competing home-contractor is the wages he must pay. In northern California alone, there are 12,000 construction firms bidding on various home constructions. The union is in no position to bargain with each single contractor. Therefore the union organises an *employers'* association and enforces stability in the

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

market by holding wage rates constant over a period of time.

Long ago, the construction unions and the contractors were quick to realise the monopoly advantages to be gained by mutual co-operation. Thus, on many local projects, outside contractors are kept out because the unions refuse to supply them with labour; or if they win a bid, they find themselves afflicted by strikes or slowdowns. Few electronic firms, for example, will undertake to make wirings and fixtures to be installed in New York construction projects, because the electricians in New York refuse to handle material that was not made in New York.

Often the union, as in the case of coal, can decide the fate of firms and the future of an industry. Because of competing fuels, like natural gas and oil, the demand for coal has shrunk almost a third in the last ten years. John L. Lewis and the union faced a choice. Either they could seek to restrict output and force all the firms in the industry to share the dwindling market, thus saving the marginal firms; or they could allow the marginal firms to go to the wall. In the decisive coal negotiations of 1952 the southern coal producers, owners mostly of smaller mines, offered to meet all the union demands if Lewis would order three-day production in the industry. The large mechanised mines opposed this move since it meant higher overhead costs for unutilised equipment. Lewis, reversing a previous course, chose to line up with the large mechanised mines and their desire for continuous output. The decision meant higher wages for the men but a permanent loss of jobs in the industry. The union could accept that because of the natural attrition of an ageing mine work-force. Other unions could not solve the dilemma so easily.

THUS it is that a trade union, operating in a given market environment, necessarily becomes an ally of "its" industry. Less realised is the fact that, in the evolution of the labour contract, the union becomes part of the "control system of management." He becomes, as C. Wright Mills has put it, a "manager of discontent."

It is difficult for a manager, faced with an aggressive group of union leaders across a bargaining table, to realise that the trade union performs a vital function *for him*. All he can think of is that, because of the union, he has lost some of his power. And to a great extent this is true: he cannot fire a man at whim, promotions are on the basis of seniority, a foreman cannot make job transfers—these are performed by the union.

But in taking over these powers, the union also takes over the difficult function of specifying the priorities of demands—and in so doing, it not only relieves management of many political headaches but becomes a buffer between management and rank-and-file resentments. The union, particularly on the local plant level, is not a monolith but a web of interest groups which reaches far down to the lowest unit of plant organisation, the work group. These interests often conflict: skilled *v.* unskilled, piecework *v.* hourly-paid, night-shift *v.* day-shift, old *v.* young. In formulating its demands, the union has to decide: should a wage increase go "across the board" (i.e., be equal for everybody) or should it be on a percentage basis in order to maintain the differentials in skill?

The second fact is that the union often takes over the task of disciplining the men, when management cannot. This is particularly true during "wildcat strikes" when the men refuse to acknowledge the authority of management, but are forced back to work by the union leaders who, by the logic of a bargain, have to enforce a contract.

Managing these discontents becomes difficult not only at bargaining periods but throughout the year as well. During a time of lay-offs, the question of which type of seniority is to be followed (whether by particular type of work or by a plant-wide list) becomes a bread-and-butter struggle. But the major headache arises when workers, in order to keep a company competitive, and thus safeguard jobs, cut their wage rates, tighten their time assignments, and accept increased production loads. In effect, they disrupt the uniform patterns which the union has been seeking to impose throughout the industry.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The problem of "my company first" is one that has plagued the United Auto Workers: should the national office seek to maintain uniform standards, and if so, to push the marginal company to the wall? Or should it protect the employment of the men by allowing them to cut wages and reduce standards? In recent years, the U.A.W. has chosen to safeguard employment.

The question of "my company first" has its counterpart in this "my industry first" attitude of different unions. Thus the interested conflicts become raised to national levels. The teamsters oppose government favours for the railroad. The coal union seeks higher tariffs against foreign oil production, and unites with the railroads—since the railroads gain a large share of their income from hauling coal —in joint lobbying ventures. The machinists, whose strength is in the aircraft industry, will lobby for more planes, while the boilermakers, who construct ships, urge a larger navy. More generally, unions will often engage in joint promotional campaigns with an industry in order to stimulate demand and save jobs. This is as true for the "socialist" Ladies' Garment Workers as for the narrow, craft-minded plasterers' union. In these, as in many other instances (e.g., trucking, glass, etc.), the initiative has come from the unions since they are more powerful and more market-conscious than any single firm.

IN EFFECT, then, the logic of market unionism leads to a limited, uneasy partnership of union and company, or union and industry. Uneasy because in many cases employers would still prefer to exercise sole power, although the more sophisticated employers know the value of such powerful allies as the union in safeguarding their interests. Uneasy, too, because there is still the historic tendency of labour, acting as a social movement, to oppose the employers as a class. This tendency derives from the ideological conception of labour as the "underdog." More specifically, it has been reinforced by the political alliances, forged in the early days of the New Deal, which enabled labour to obtain legislative protection for its organising activities. These political alliances lead necessarily to wider areas of group or class conflict: tax policy, subsidising housing, medical insurance, and the whole range of welfare measures which add up to a more or less coherent philosophy of liberal politics.

To-day, all unions are, willy-nilly, forced into politics. The problem is what sort of politics will be played. Will the A.F.L.-C.I.O. simply be a political arm for market unionism, protecting the various interest groups that are its members, or will it become an integral part of a genuine social movement? Some clue to the answer may be found from American labour's past. If we apply the distinction between social movement and market unionism to the past, we derive the following periodisation:

(1) From 1860 to 1880, U.S. labour was primarily a social movement. The socialist and anarchist influences were paramount. There was a high degree of political activity, and many efforts to create labour parties. Unions built producers' co-operatives, and supported many reform schemes. The extent of organisation, however, was small.

(2) From 1880 to 1920, the two tendencies were in conflict: the A.F. of L. represented the narrow conception of market unionism, while such groups as the Socialists, the I.W.W., and other anarcho-syndicalist elements sought to build radical labour movements. The A.F. of L. won out.

(3) From 1933 to 1940 (the period of the 1920's was one of stagnation) labour once again assumed the rôle of a social movement. The emerging C.I.O., faced by the attacks of the industrial combines, tended to take on an ideological colouration. The influx of the intellectuals, particularly the Socialists and the Communists, heightened this radical-political quality. Support by the federal government gave labour an awareness of the necessity for political action. And John L. Lewis, a shrewd and dynamic labour leader, realised the possibility of welding together a new political bloc.

(4) From 1940 to 1955, labour lost this ideological flavour and concentrated, instead, on market unionism. There were several reasons.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

First, the sense of national unity created by the war. Second, the acceptance by large industry of trade unionism, at first because of the need for uninterrupted production, later because of the realisation that the unions could not be broken directly. Third, the need of the newly-built unions to consolidate their collective bargaining position in the plant. Fourth, the attack on the Communists in the unions, beginning in 1947, and the eventual elimination of their influence.

AND THE future? Where U.S. labour goes from here is a difficult question, for the trade union movement is now at an impasse. The source of its difficulty lies deep in the facts of present-day American life.

1. *Union membership has reached its upper limit.* In the last five years U.S. unions have ceased to grow. In fact, the proportion of the unionised in the work force has actually declined.

To-day there are roughly 16 million workers (plus another 850,000 members of Canadian affiliates) belonging to American trade unions as against two million a quarter of a century ago. Measured against a labour force of 65 million persons, this is slightly under 25 per cent.; seen more realistically as a proportion of the wage and salaried persons (i.e., excluding farmers, self-employed professionals, and small businessmen) the unions have organised about 30 per cent. of the employee group of the society. But in organising this 30 per cent., they have reached a saturation mark; they have organised as much of their potential as they can.

If one distinguishes between blue-collar and white-collar workers, then it is likely that about 75 per cent. of the blue-collar force—factory workers, miners, railway men, building craftsmen, and labourers—belong to unions. In coal and metal-mining, in railroad and construction, in public utilities, unions have organised between 80 and 90 per cent. of the blue-collar force. In basic manufacturing—auto, aircraft, steel, rubber, ship, glass, paper, electrical equipment, transportation equipment—about 80 per cent. of plant and production workers are organised. The remaining obstacle in the unorganised units is their small size. A U.A.W. survey, for example, showed that 97 per cent. of the unorganised plants within the union's "jurisdiction" have less than fifty workers. These plants are extremely difficult to organise. The social relations within a small firm are very different from those in a large one—the identification with an employer is greater; employer counter-pressure is easier; the cost to the union of reaching and servicing these places is very high and often "uneconomic," since unions, as business organisations, have their cost and efficiency problems as well. The only unorganised *industries* are oil, chemicals, and textiles. In oil and chemicals, wages are extraordinarily high because labour costs are only a slight element in total costs, and workers are organised in independent unions. In textiles, the old paternalistic and southern mill-village pattern has been strong enough to resist unionisation.

What then of the other fields? In the trade and service fields, employing about fifteen million workers, unions have only a slight foothold—in restaurants, hotels, laundries—but usually only in the metropolitan centres where other unions have been able to help organisation. Most of these units are small, and thus difficult to organise.

In the white-collar and office field (banks, real estate, insurance, as well as the office forces of the large industrial companies), unions have failed signally. In plants where the blue-collar force is organised, the firm usually follows the practice of granting tandem wage increases to the office workers, so that the latter have no need or incentive to join a union. In the insurance companies and in white-collar employment generally, there is a high turnover. Jobs are held by young girls, recruited directly from school, who leave for marriage after five or six years, and who are reluctant to join a union. In general, white-collar workers in the U.S. shrink, for status reasons, from identifying themselves with the dirty-handed blue-collar workers. In European and Asian countries, teachers and civil service employees may con-

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sider themselves the leaders of the working class. In the U.S. these groups seek to emphasise the differences between them.

2. *Unions have reached the limits of collective bargaining.* This may be a startling statement, but yet it is one of the most important facts tending to reshape the American labour movement. By the "limits of collective bargaining" I mean simply the growing awareness by unions that they can obtain wage and welfare increases equal only to the increases in the productivity of the country. Such a story may be an old one to unions in Europe, who are sensitive to the trade positions of their countries, but it is new in the U.S.

Even the *idea* of productivity is a relatively recent one. (It is, perhaps, one of the reasons why Marx's analysis of capitalism has been proven wrong. For Marx, wealth was gained through "exploitation." Now we can see that wealth, private corporate wealth and national wealth, increases only through increases in productivity.) The turning point in American labour history, I think, came with the idea of the annual productivity wage increase. This is the conception that the workers are entitled *each year* to a wage increase, above and beyond the change in the cost-of-living. One may argue as to how much productivity has advanced—whether it is 2 per cent. or 3 per cent. or 4 per cent.; these are statistical questions. What is settled is the fact that each year the living standard of the worker will advance—in the case of the auto workers, about 3 per cent. (If one compounds the 3 per cent. increase, then the living standard will have doubled in a little over twenty-five years.) Curiously, the idea of the productivity wage increase was not a union but a corporation innovation, by General Motors. The company offered such a wage increase in return for a five-year contract, guaranteeing labour peace.

To-day the idea of the productivity wage-increase has spread throughout most of basic American manufacturing. In this way a strong demand factor is built into the economy, thus holding off a downturn of the business cycle. But wage rises are geared to the most productive sector of the economy, while inefficient firms, or industries which by their nature cannot increase productivity (barbers, waiters, etc.), have to match these increases. This leads to a strong inflationary impact on the economy.

Such questions aside, the importance of the productivity wage-increase is that, despite the lingering rhetoric of militancy, unions have accepted the idea of limits to what can be obtained through economic bargaining. I do not mean to suggest that there will be no more bargaining. But we have here the *bureaucratisation* of bargaining in the establishment of limits.

3. *The rise of the salariat.* A third crucial change in the nature of the American labour movement arises from the shifting composition of the work force. Briefly put, the *proletariat* is being replaced by a *salariat*, with a consequent change in the psychology of the workers. The trend arises in part from the fact, as Colin Clark long ago noted, that with increasing productivity, greater output is being achieved with a smaller industrial work force, while the demand for new services, entertainment, education, recreation, and research means the spread of more and new middle-class occupations. But we have appreciated less the changes in the work force *within* the giant manufacturing firms themselves. For with the increases in production have come increases in research, merchandising, sales and office force, etc. In the chemical industry, for example, from 1947 to 1952, production increased 50 per cent.; the blue-collar force increased 3 per cent.; the white-collar force by 50 per cent. In the fifteen largest corporations in the country, the salaried work force is already one-third to one-half of the hourly-paid production force. For example:

	Hourly workers	*Salaried workers*
du Pont	52,000	31,000
Standard Oil	30,000	27,500
Westinghouse	70,000	40,000
Ford	135,000	40,000
G.M.	360,000	130,000

These salaried groups do not speak the old language of labour. Nor can they be appealed to in the old class-conscious terms. Their rise

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

poses a difficult problem for the leadership of the American labour movement.

4. *The loss of élan and the disfavour of the public.* The labour movement, in its present form, is less than twenty-five years old, and the men on top are the men who built it. But they are no longer young—the average age of the A.F.L.-C.I.O. executive council is in the middle sixties—and they have lost their élan. The organising staffs, too, are old, and there is no longer the reservoir of young radicals to rely on for passing out leaflets at the plant gates.

But more than this, there is a crisis in union morality and public confidence. It is not simply a problem of racketeering. Racketeering is shaped by the market. It has always had a hold in the small-unit construction trades, the long-shoremen, and the teamsters, where the chief cost to an employer is "waiting time," and where one can therefore easily exact a toll from employers. And one finds no racketeering in the mass-production industries. Even in the fields where "shakedowns" are common, racketeering is on a considerably smaller scale to-day than twenty-five years ago when the industrial gangster flourished in the U.S. The real sickness lies in the decline of unionism as a moral vocation, the fact that so many union leaders have become money-hungry, taking on the grossest features of business society, despoiling the union treasuries for private gain. And where there has not been outright spoilation—typical of the teamster, bakery, textile, and laundry unions—one finds among union leaders an appalling arrogance and high-handedness in their relation to the rank-and-file, which derives from the corruption of power. Such gross manifestations of power have alienated a middle-class public which, for twenty years, was tolerant of, if not sympathetic to, unionism.

IT IS quite possible that the labour movement may sink, slowly, slothfully into the market rôle of being a junior partner to industry, as is now the case with the building trades. But it is more likely, in my opinion, that in the years ahead we will find U.S. labour seeking to re-define itself as a social movement.

One reason is that, with politics becoming so intertwined with bargaining, the need to extend labour's political power means that the unions will have to play a more direct rôle in the Democratic Party and will have to build a liberal coalition in order to strengthen their own position in that party. A subtle change in the political process itself, moulded by the spread of mass media and mass communication, reinforces this tendency. This is the emergence of what may be called "symbol" groups (or those bearing ideological tags) as against the "interest" groups (with their single focus on protecting the specific tangible interest of a specific, tangible group). For in a mass society, where public opinion is king, various groups are more than ever forced to assume some coherent identity and clothe their aims in national or general-interest terms. This is particularly true where the poll concept of democracy takes hold, for polls can only formulate problems in symbolic terms, such as: what should *The Farmer* do (without worrying about the complication that "The Farmer" is a whole spectrum of persons), or what should *Labour* do, without enquiring further as to the meaning of such a generic term as "Labour."

But not only the nature of polls, the new process of informal group representation in government as well becomes a shaping element in this fusion of coherent identities. Thus "Business" is asked to name its representatives to a government advisory board; and "Labour" is asked likewise. Political issues become national in scope, and "Labour" as a symbolic group, is asked to define "its" attitude toward such issues; and it has to learn to compose its internal differences in doing so. One of the pressures for unity between the A.F. of L. and C.I.O., for example, was the need to have a single set of spokesmen to speak for "labour" on various national issues.

More directly, the tendency towards the transformation of the union into a social movement gains ground in the undisputed emergence of Walter Reuther, aged fifty, as

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the top spokesman for U.S. labour, a move which awaits only the retirement of George Meany. Reuther is not popular with his peers. He makes them uncomfortable. He is no back-slapper. He will not relax. His vices are few and his energies are enormous. Like the Jansenist confronting the "whiskey priests," his example calls them to account for their own moral failures. Yet there is no one else who can lead them. And Reuther, temperamentally and biographically, is an ideologue; and his conception of the labour movement is ideological.

What will be the political and ideological content of this new unionism as a social movement? This is difficult to say. The "left" ideology has in recent years become utterly exhausted; and the idea of nationalisation holds no appeal. Most likely we shall see the re-emergence of a rather more emphatic version of "Labourism," insisting more vigorously than ever before on such matters as better housing, more schools, adequate medical care, the creation of a more "humanistic" work atmosphere in the factory, and the like. These are generally prosaic in nature, and it takes great skill on the part of an individual to dramatise them. Whether Reuther can do it or not, remains to be seen. One thing, however, is clear: since Shaw made his *mauvais mot* more than twenty-five years ago, American trade unionism has changed; to-day it is the Welfare State (slightly bureaucratised) of the proletariat.

William Scobie

In Cyprus

The little hut, the little hut,
The music and the china cup,
Tea-leaf music thin and small
Arranged like beds against a wall.

The water-tower, the tiny bay,
Where military figures lay
And also that small narrow bed
Grew as familiar as the dead.

The dogs came in to lick the soles
Of my feet through the stocking-holes
And sadly they sat down and sighed.
And then those others that had died.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Jon Silkin Baited

On the still bank I shake
My intense line of chosen fly into
The stream where change is flowed
Into deep change, and tempt the casual fish.
But who is the bait and who
In that lilting procession, fish or man?

Casually reflected image
Fish or fisherman, that heaving minute
Changes my life away.
Life as sensation baits me to grasp the fish.
I cast into the stream
And take my chosen bride into my arms.

Never shall I within
That crystal water net so brilliant
Or coloured a dancing fish
As I bestride her. I make the minute yield
Only a meadow's breath
Green, green intangible, breath through my life.

Gentle as a new bride
The baited fish leaps to my line. I pull
Its fretting body out of
The unguent water wriggling with breath;
I lay that fish onto
The meadow where my girl lies, netted in

Green, green, a green breath.
It is his death. He lies still through that stroke
Of my mounted hand upon
His quivering neck, struck, and lies stilled upon
My red, huge hand;
And such a fish for such a stroke as this.

Casually reflected image
Fish or fisherman, I hurl that creature
Back into the stream.
Its life, small as a pool of soft blood in
The hunter's hand it was
Not worth the tremor of the hand to kill.

Like this death hooks our flesh,
He puts his subtle hooks into our flesh
Baited with tiny flies
And nets our lives away. Death is that dead
Creature's unworthy kiss;
We are death's fish as we are death to fish.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LETTER FROM BANGKOK

The Country with a Smile

IT WOULD be almost impossible, I thought, for Bangkok to live up to its reputation. I heard so much while I was in Asia about the delights of the Siamese capital and the charms of its people that I was almost biased against them before I arrived. What can Bangkok have to offer—I asked myself with a frown—to a man who has seen Hong Kong? Can the Siamese be more likeable than the Malayans?

But Bangkok and the Siamese did live up to their reputation, if not quite in the way my informants meant. Bangkok is not a beautiful city, in fact it is a very ugly one. It has no shape or plan; it is almost as confusing as London without London's many redeeming features. The Gods are housed all right but human beings are less fortunate. While the temples of Siam, especially the Temple of the Emerald Buddha, rival in magnificence European architecture at its best, there are less than half a dozen decent buildings for mortal habitation and there are far too many ramshackle huts and other eyesores. The city is a strange mixture of splendour and filth. Comparison with the Malayans? Well, the Malayans are very charming people indeed. But if the Malayans never stop smiling, the Siamese never stop laughing. Even their currency unit has the delightful name of tical, pronounced tickle.

I could not help falling in love with their philosophy of life, which had, in fact, been mine for a long time. I had been a crypto-Siamese without being aware of it. It is the philosophy of the shrug of the shoulders—not, however, in a cynical "couldn't-care-less" manner. On the contrary. They do accept the pleasures of life gratefully, but not avidly. Why worry? Why hurry? Things are never as important as they seem. And, hurry or no, we shall all arrive at the same destination sooner or later. Is the earth's existence really threatened by the hydrogen bomb? Most regrettable if it is indeed so, but why worry before it blows up? After all, it may never happen. In any case, it is not such a terrible thing for the earth to be blown to bits as most people, inclined to exaggerate, are trying to make out. There will be plenty of other desirable celestial bodies left in the heavens.

Ambition, advancement, prestige, and keeping up with the Siamese equivalent of the Joneses are notions as strange, indeed, incomprehensible to the Siamese as the idea of being happy and content in a primitive mud hut (without hot water and the usual offices) would be for a New York salesman.

*

SIAM—or Thailand, if we want to be pedantic—is the only country in South-East Asia which has never been under the domination of any European power. (She was, however, occupied by the Japanese during World War II.) Not to have been under European domination is partly a blessing; but it is also a little annoying. The Siamese have always been free men and this may well be the explanation for the pleasant and open manners of the Thais—although I know quite a number of European races which have always been free, yet are far less pleasant than the Siamese. They treat Europeans as their equals, do not know what a "white sahib" complex is, and have no feeling of inferiority on account of their colour (which, by the way, is a much more attractive colour than ours and ought to give them a superiority complex, if anything). After the war, there was a terrific upsurge of Asian nationalism. All the peoples of this region fought glorious battles for their independence, got rid of their European masters, and proved that they could manage their own affairs. But Siam could fight no glorious battles for her independence because she was independent to start with; she could not get rid of her European masters because there were no European masters to get rid of. She found no way of proving that she could run her own affairs, having already proved that long ago to everyone's satisfaction. She had her own civil service, army, navy, and air force; and even her civil air line, with Siamese aircrews. The whole of South-East Asia was in a ferment, drunk with the exhilaration of a dream come true; and poor Siam felt a little bit left out of it.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This situation had to be remedied in one way or another. And with the help of the Communists and their fellow-travellers, as well as the naïve nationalists, it has, indeed, been remedied to some extent. If anti-European feelings did not exist after the war, they could with a little effort be created; if there were not too many Europeans about to serve for a proper target, more and more Americans were pouring in to serve on SEATO—and the establishment of the South-East Asian Treaty Organisation gave, of course, a new impetus to the Communists in this campaign of denigration. To the South-East Asian the American is, after all, just as good a European as anyone else. "European" in South-East Asia is simply equivalent to "white man"; the expression "white man" is not used because it is regarded as pointless and degrading. That is why all "white men" including the Americans are called "Europeans." It is a very good name for them, I am sure. But I invented an even better one. I suggested that they should be called "Americans." So far my suggestion has been brushed aside as extravagant and silly.

In the last two years or so, there has been a campaign in the Thai press against all Europeans. It is not too violent—nothing the Siamese do is too violent. When a half-drunk American sergeant got into a brawl with some Siamese in a night club over a lady of easy virtue, huge headlines in some of the papers next morning complained about the womanhood of Thailand being insulted by imperialists. Or if a big American car knocked down a poor Siamese pedestrian, these papers clamoured about "The Way They Treat Us!" This kind of thing has been going on for quite a time, week after week, if not day after day, and it has made some impression. Many Europeans feel extremely irritated and will tell you that Bangkok is not such a pleasant place to live in as it used to be. But it is, as I have said, still pleasant enough. Some Europeans are too sensitive; after all, oversensitiveness is not an Asian monopoly.

*

In Siam everybody is called by his or her Christian name (or Buddhist name—anyway, I mean the first name) exactly as on I.T.V. People's family names are usually unknown even to their friends. If your name is, say, Bisdar Siwasariyanon, everyone will call you Bisdar. The letters you receive will be addressed to Bisdar—your surname will not be put on them. Your servants will call you Mr. Bisdar. If you meet people on equal terms they will call you Bisdar. And even when you become really intimate with a person, he will not start calling you Siwasariyanon.

The trishaws—the tricycle taxis—are great fun. They are not quite as uncomfortable as some European taxis but they are already quite as expensive. Neither taxis nor trishaws have meters and the visitor is well advised to settle the question of the fare before he starts on his journey. I, personally, do not mind being treated like a tourist and I do not complain when cheated. But the cheating should contain an element of decency and moderation. On one occasion a taxi-driver demanded thirty ticals for a journey I wanted to make. I offered him fifteen but he refused and muttered something about me in fluent Siamese. I stopped another taxi and offered the driver ten ticals which he accepted with thanks. As I had paid seven ticals for the same journey the day before, I began to wonder whether, in fact, even five ticals would not have been overpaying him.

Compared with the Siamese style of driving, the French are meek, cowardly, and patient, the Italians polite, quiet, and restrained. Rush-hour traffic in Bangkok has to be seen to be believed. It is exactly as in Japan where the taxi-drivers are recruited from the ranks of former suicide pilots. I, personally, regard their present occupation as incomparably more dangerous than the former. A member of the British Embassy who had spent a long time in Bangkok told me: "Back in England on leave, and on the very first day too, I performed a perfectly decent—nay, courteous—piece of Bangkok driving. I was fined ten guineas for it and my licence was endorsed."

*

Siam is prosperous; the Siamese are poor. The country is about twice as large as Great Britain and has about one-third of the population. Although wages and incomes are very low, even the poorest man in the country lives high above starvation level. "There is rice in the field and there is fish in the pond" they say and they are content. They are, indeed, very conservative within the sphere of their own contentment, they do not hanker after improvement and desire no change. They marry the two or three women they love and live with them happily ever after.

The Siamese may, in fact, marry one woman only but they may keep as many concubines as they can afford. The various ladies are, however, kept apart so that the Siamese male has to maintain several separate households. Their system is more or less the same as in many European countries except that it involves less furtiveness.

Nonetheless, a Siamese may sometimes lie to his wife and tell her that he has been with one of his concubines—which is right and proper—while he was, in fact, gambling—which is wrong and immoral.

Many families are now Westernised, but apart from these, Siamese wives are kept very much

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in the background. They seem to be humble and silent servants; but in reality they very often hold the purse-strings and keep their lords and masters under their thumbs. Eighty per cent. of all the real estate in Siam is said to be in the hands of women. The women are shrewder and more sensible in business matters than the men, who tend to be spendthrifts and gamblers. As one Siamese man told me with endearing sincerity: "We are all right as a race because our women are so wonderful. They have all the virtues of our race; we have all its vices."

*

In the matter of lowering film production costs, the world could do worse than take a lead from Siam. Since printing is too expensive, the Siamese make only one single, silent copy of each film. Since Siamese films are very popular in the country, more popular than any foreign film, the single copy is literally played to shreds. An actor and an actress attend the cinema during the performances and speak all the parts, male and female, over a loudspeaker system. They have a wide variety of different voices at their command. Animal sounds, when needed, are fairly shared between them. Foreign films are "dubbed" into Siamese in the same way. "Around the World in Eighty Days" was the only recent film to be given a gala performance: no less than three actors—two men and one woman—were present.

*

The Siamese have three great national institutions in which they firmly believe: (1) Their religion; (2) their national revolutions; and (3) their monarchy. A close look at each of these will help us to understand the Siamese character which is neither Oriental nor inscrutable.

The national religion of Siam is Buddhism and the King is the Defender of the Faith. It is widely held that it was this undogmatic and attractive religion that created the pleasant Siamese character. The truth is exactly the reverse: it was the pleasant Siamese character which turned their own version of Buddhism into such an attractive and undogmatic creed, so different from, for example, the cruel rigidity and dogmatism of Tibetan Buddhism. Religion has, of course, a great effect on peoples; but national character has an even greater counter-effect on religion. Islam, too, has been mellowed down in Malaya, just as Christianity has often been commercialised in the United States, or as a Protestant version of Catholicism has been invented in the Land of Compromise.

There are 18,416 temples and monasteries in the country and the images for Buddha far outnumber the human population. For more than thirteen centuries all the artists of Siam have produced these images and practically nothing else. The images are made of all sorts of materials and vary in size from miniatures to the 378-foot giant at Nakorn Pathom. But otherwise they differ little. Siamese artists cannot be accused of seeking originality at all costs. They have been patiently copying the same images for over 1,300 years and they would be rather shocked and apologetic if it could be shown that any trace of originality had slipped into their work in the meantime.

You cannot walk ten minutes in Bangkok without meeting several monks in their yellow robes. Every young man has to become a monk at one time of his life. It is a kind of national service. There is no territorial army in Siam; there is a territorial clergy. In the monasteries young men purify their minds, study the scriptures, learn self-denial and self-discipline. On entering the monasteries they have to give up all their worldly possessions—even the yellow robes do not belong to them. On the buses they are carried free of charge and on trains they pay half-fare but someone has to accompany them to the station and buy their tickets for them because they are not supposed to have money even for half-fares. That is why I was somewhat puzzled when I saw a young monk buy a lottery ticket in the street. Lottery tickets may be the exception. I cannot really tell.

Very early every morning, hosts of monks are to be seen begging for their food. But the "mendicant friar" is a purely European notion and what the Siamese monks do is, in fact, not begging at all. They walk from house to house giving people a chance to acquire merit and grace by filling their bowls with rice, boiled eggs, omelettes, fried fish, etc. They do not ask for anything nor do they thank you for what you give. They must not utter a word. Indeed, it is for *you* to thank *them*: it is you who have acquired merit through their services.

(Another way of acquiring merit is to free birds. You can buy caged birds in front of the larger temples, open their cages, and set them free. I had the vague feeling that someone must have previously lost a little merit by catching these birds but, after all, it is always the sins of others that give us an opportunity of being virtuous.)

Most young men serve two, three, or six months as monks. Initially they all join up for life. To become a temporary monk is unheard-of. It is quite in order to join for life and quit after a few months. The King himself served a stretch. He stayed in holy orders for fifteen days.

*

Revolutions are the second great national institution of the Siamese. Wars

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

are out of fashion with these sensible people. In the past they had plenty of wars, mostly against the Burmese and sometimes the *casus belli* was provided by white elephants. But politics being what they are, these white elephants were really only red herrings.

The Siamese revolutions are, on the whole, pleasant affairs. They may be less world-shaking than the Russian Revolution but they are certainly much more comfortable to live through. Few people understand, however, exactly what happened in September 1957 and why there was a revolution at all. Marshal Pibul Songgram himself did not quite understand it until it was too late.

Briefly the story is this: Siam was invaded and occupied by the Japanese immediately after the attack on Pearl Harbour. Nai Pridi—a hero of the 1932 revolution and a member of the Regency Council—thereupon entered into a secret understanding with the Allies and became the leader of the resistance movement, while Marshal Pibul Songgram—who led the army officers in 1932—collaborated with the Japanese. After the war, Marshal Pibul and the collaborationist army officers suffered an eclipse and the liberal Nai Pridi formed a rather left-wing government. In June 1946, King Ananda was shot dead in mysterious circumstances and in 1947 another of the periodical revolutions broke out: this time Marshal Pibul, notwithstanding his past, regained power and became, first, Commander-in-Chief of the army and later Prime Minister. Nai Pridi eventually fled to China where he still lives and where he has been drawn nearer and nearer to Communism. Since it was the army which usually helped various revolutionaries to success, certain opposition leaders thought it might be a good idea to obtain the help of the navy on their own behalf. In 1952 Marshal Pibul, however, humiliated and disarmed the navy, jailed many of Pridi's followers, received much American aid, and went on ruling the country with little trouble until 1955.

To counterbalance the influence of the navy, Pibul built up another strong force—the police, always a pretty formidable factor in Siam. In command he placed Marshal Phao. His other right-hand man—and successor in the post of Commander-in-Chief of the army—was Marshal Sarit. Phao and Sarit were excellent choices. Pibul knew perfectly well that a dictator does not need "strong men" to help him to maintain his grip; he needs weak men—and that is why these two Marshals were chosen. In addition, he could play them off easily against one another. So Pibul was comfortably set for a nice peaceful rule but he committed a mistake.

A dictator can afford to do many things. He may even conceivably do a great deal of good for his country. But a dictator must dictate. He may be feared; he may even be respected; but he can never seek to be loved. The dictator who tries to become a constitutional ruler and starts hankering after the love of the masses, digs his own grave. And that is exactly what Marshal Pibul Songgram did.

In 1955 Pibul—for the first time in some thirty years—left his country. His journey was not really necessary. He came to Europe and, among other countries, visited England. He had a good look at the House of Commons, at the opposition, and at our press, and—amazing as it sounds—he liked it all. During his tour Pibul conceived the idea of becoming a democratic leader—indeed, a freely elected, democratic leader. On his return to Siam, he allowed opposition parties to form, he tolerated an opposition press, and decided to hold elections.

We do not need to follow all the intricacies of Siamese politics to understand how Marshal Pibul came to grief. But it was not really the expected and foreseeable that followed—Pibul knew better than that. He won his election all right and where results were not sufficiently presentable, Marshal Phao and his police saw to it that they were subjected to some secret plastic surgery. Pibul, in the end, was not defeated by the opposition he had created; he was thrown out by his own friends. And he was not even dismissed for political reasons. His successors and former associates continued his former policies, which are right-wing, strongly anti-Communist and, while very much in favour of American aid, not very much in favour of Americans.

What happened then? Pibul's two right-hand men had both built up formidable business empires. One controlled the lotteries and a few banks, the other controlled all the trade with Red China. Both enjoyed innumerable other monopolies, among them—and no doubt without their personal knowledge—the opium trade and the brothel industry. Both men also controlled a number of newspapers and the whole game became so complicated that sometimes the two Marshals were attacked in their own papers. The ensuing revolution in September 1957 was simply the clash of business interests. Politics hardly entered into it. Marshal Pibul was out and had to flee the country before he, the old fox, could realise what it was all about. No one was really against him. But it had to be either Phao or Sarit, and Pibul was not a business ally of either. But the reader need not worry: Marshal Pibul did not leave the country as a poor man either.

Once it came to a clash, Sarit was bound to win, simply because he was Commander-in-Chief

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the army and the army was still much stronger than Phao's police. Not that these respective strengths were ever measured in deadly combat. One single round was fired in the Siamese revolution by a startled sentry in the outskirts of Bangkok. No one was hurt.

*

SIAM is as deeply and sincerely royalist as England. King Bhumibol Adulyadej is thirty-one years old and he is the younger brother of King Ananda, assassinated in 1946. He is married and has three daughters.

It is extremely difficult to have an audience with the King, as he is very carefully protected. But if he is rarely seen, he is often heard. He is often heard because he is the composer of popular, light music. His music is frequently performed by various Siamese orchestras and sometimes even in the United States where, however, it is not quite so warmly acclaimed as in Siam. The King's other great hobby is photography and his pictures are sometimes reproduced in the press. King Bhumibol is a retiring young man. He likes best—I was told—the "company of his fellow musicians."

In spite of all the caution of his courtiers, the King often drives about in his own fast sports car. Few people recognise him in the street: the Siamese are not very observant and the royal car has no special royal number plates. The King likes speeding but up to now he has had no trouble with the police.

Court etiquette is very strict and formal. The feet and the head still play an important part in Siam. It is held that a servant's head must never be higher than his master's and a subject's head must never be higher than the King's. To think of a servant's or a subject's *feet* being higher than the master's or the King's *head* is almost sacrilegious. That is why until recently high houses were not allowed to be built in Siam, in case people's feet should be higher than the sovereign's head. (The building of brick houses was not allowed either. Only royal palaces and temples could be built of brick.) To-day some restrictions have been relaxed but are still strictly adhered to in the presence of the King himself. Royal pages, for example, have to crawl on the floor in the royal presence.

To crawl properly, pages and servants need acrobatic skill. At least one palm has to be flat on the floor which the servant's forehead must also touch. If, in addition, he has to carry a large tray with, say, thirty-two filled glasses on it, his performance becomes a virtuoso act worthy of any circus. This crawling is still the rule in the houses of some aristocrats, too, but it is getting rarer and rarer and the younger generation is trying to abolish it as quickly as possible. Yet the old habits die hard. A prince of the royal blood—a charming and enlightened young man—told me: "I abolished the practice in my own house long ago. Or rather tried to abolish it. I told my servants that worms crawled—not human beings."

"They were delighted and grateful," I remarked.

"Not so much delighted and grateful as upset and very resentful," he replied. "They are very conservative. They believe in my being a prince and their being servants. They like crawling, too. They say they owe me some respect. I tell them I don't quite see why but that in any case, they must find some other means of expressing their deep respect for me and give up crawling."

"So they gave it up," I said. "With regret, maybe, but they gave it up."

"Not at all. They are still trying to get away with it. They crawl less but they still crawl as much as they safely can. They walk up to me with a tray and then, when handing me a drink, they suddenly collapse. They crawl when they think I don't see them too. They love crawling. They seem to enjoy it. They also believe in it and regard it as their birthright."

I understood. There is a strong and noble desire in the bosom of men to be free; and an equally strong and noble desire to crawl.

George Mikes

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Miron Bialoszewski

Five Polish Poems

Translated by Czeslaw Milosz

Miron Bialoszewski, who is now living in Warsaw, is the author of these five poems which I have translated from the Polish. He is thirty years of age, and he underwent his literary formation during the years of Stalinist orthodoxy. An uncompromising outcast, his writings found no favour with the censors of the Polish publishing houses, and he spent the years of Stalinism in misery. His first volume of poems appeared in 1956. The younger generation immediately recognised in him one of its spokesmen. The tendency he represents is familiar to all readers of Polish poetry of recent decades. We should be forewarned against judging his modernism by Western standards. What in the West might seem the routine of the avant garde in him is reaction against the pressure of "Socialist realism." By this I do not mean that the interest of his work has nothing to do with its very real artistic achievement. His poems seem to me valid in themselves, quite apart from his resistance to political slogans and his repugnance to social rhetoric. I find in these poems the rough simplicity of a writer who looks directly and freshly at a world of objects which has been veiled from people in this part of Europe by the abracadabra of pseudo-scientific doctrines. He is exploring a zone which has been strictly forbidden to poets and painters in Eastern Europe for many years: and his quality differs from that of Western poets belonging to the same spiritual family.—Czeslaw Milosz.

And even, even if they take away the stove

My inexhaustible ode to joy

I have a stove
similar to a triumphal arch!

They take away my stove
similar to a triumphal arch!!

Give me back my stove
similar to a triumphal arch!!!

They took it away.

What remains is
a grey
naked
hole.
Grey naked hole.

And this is enough for me;
grey naked hole
grey naked hole
greynakedhole.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A ballad of going down to the store

First I went down to the store
by the stairs,
ah, imagine only,
by the stairs.

Then people known to people unknown
passed me by and I passed them by.
Regret
That you did not see
how people walk,
regret!

I entered a complete store:
lamps of glass were burning.
I saw somebody—he sat down—
and what I heard? what I heard?
rustling of bags and human talk.

And indeed,
indeed
I returned.

Autoportrait as felt

They look at me
so probably I have a face.
Of all the faces known
I remember least my own.

Often my hands
live in absolute separation.
Should I then count them as mine?
Where are my limits?
I am overgrown by
movement or half-life.

Yet always is crawling in me
full or not full
existence

I bear by myself
a place of my own.
When I lose it
it will mean I am not.

I am not,
so I do not doubt.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Garwolin—a town for ever

garlic like a pearl. . . why? garlic is but garlic

tiny umptytown
its winter is peeling

over the town
the sky of garlic
thence for the town
days are like garlic braids
dont you feel by chance
in those peels
the pressure of Roman legions?
and on the garlic flesh
a Spain skidding?
and in the bitterness of juice
a sophist?

My Jacobean fatigues

My Jacobs of tiredness

Higher
clarion-calls of form
habitations of touch,
all serenities of senses.

Lowest of all, I.
From my breast they grow
stairs of reality.

And I feel nothing.
Nothing of juiciness.
Nothing of colour.
Not only I am not
one of the Testament heroes
but worse than a flounder
glued to the bottom to die
with balloons of breath
fleeing up,
worse than a potato mother
who put forth
enormous antlers of tubes
and herself is shrinking
up to disappearance.

Strike me
construction of my world!

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

J. A. Lukacs

The World's Cities: Philadelphia

PHILADELPHIA is a very large provincial town with patrician touches.

In a democratic age and in a democratic nation such patrician touches are the first things that meet the eye of the outsider. They stand out against the broad flatness of the human landscape; they *seem* to give form to content. Thus their real proportions are frequently exaggerated: to these patrician impressions such formative influences are attributed which they no longer possess.

I made this error ten years ago, when I first came to Philadelphia. Immediately I was reminded of London. I have learned since that I was in reputable company; this was the impression of a string of eminent visitors, from the Duke of Liancourt in the 18th century to André Maurois. Here I decided to settle. It took me ten years to find out that my impression was not altogether correct. Here, nevertheless, I stay.

I remember that autumn, ten years ago. I remember the leaves, the Georgian doorways, the Adam mantels through the glistening windows of the Delancey Place town houses, the fine rain, the English bookshop. Behind me were the war years of Central Europe, the terrible siege of my native city of Budapest, the Communist ascendancy in my native country, and a hot and horrid first American summer in New York. My soul craved the Anglo-Saxon patrician air with an immense thirst. I was twenty-four years old.

The green leaves and the Georgian mantels and the Palladian windows are still here, in Philadelphia. The old cracked-leather armchair touch still exists; it is something which, despite its new cosmopolitan residents and its neo-classical architecture, the shiny plasticity of Washington does not and will not have. There are the handsome Anglo-Saxon faces of upper-class Philadelphia men and women; "handsome" is the *mot juste*, not "attractive" or "beautiful," since they are Anglo-Saxon faces. There is that hardly visible but essential touch of self-assurance in some of the surviving patrician pretensions: the genuine quality of amateur horsemanship, the determined separation of men from women after dinner, the love for stone and for brick walls, the hidden houses with their rich gardens. There are the Philadelphia oddities: the First City Troop, "city square" instead of the all-American "block"; "pavement" instead of the New York "sidewalk"; odd old clubs. There is that peculiarly puritanical upper-class custom of hard play: instead of luxuriating on Rivieras, these Philadelphians go on walking-tours through the Alps.

Most of these qualities are the marks of an autumnal civilisation, of the bourgeois age, of an age now closing everywhere in the Western world. It is perhaps symptomatic that, like most patrician cities, Philadelphia is best in the autumn. Then the fine, smoky air of the American fall pervades the city, and while at the seashore October means a foreboding chill, Philadelphia swiftly becomes cosy and warm. The dining-room of the Barclay is full; the Opera is on its way; after the last siege of the customary Philadelphian hot-September spell, the downtown streets tinkle with vigour. The shadows softly spread over the cracks in the pavement, and there is even a bright little impression of cheer. I like my

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

week-end guests to come down in the Philadelphia autumn, when the suburbs are splendid with the stunning colours of the sap-rich trees of the American Eastern seaboard. It is then, and perhaps then alone, that I can feel without reservations that America is, after all, the transatlantic product of an old and ripe civilisation: for, despite the now so fashionable assertions about the "unity of Western civilisation," I do have my doubts.

II

CERTAIN clichés about Philadelphia are literally inevitable. "An old-fashioned city"; "with Boston, the most English city in all America"; "the pervading influence of old family habits"; "the fine glow of old furniture"—they contain a good deal of truth. They are, nevertheless, just a little more than half-truths. There is a good deal in the historic character of Philadelphia which is German rather than English, philistine rather than patrician, radical rather than conservative. Scratch the Philadelphia "old English stock": you will frequently find the German ancestry. Scratch the Philadelphia "patrician": not infrequently you'll find the philistine. Scratch the "conservative citizen" in Philadelphia: you will often find the radical underneath.

Hidden under the Anglo-Saxon front there is a German facet to Philadelphia. It is historic, essential, original, and enduring. It goes deeper than the circumstance that, like every American metropolis, Philadelphia has a large German sector in North Philadelphia, for there is an even larger Italian sector in South Philadelphia and yet it is not possible to speak of an Italian stamp on the Philadelphia character. The German stamp is there. Within two years after Penn came to Shackamaxon, German immigrants settled in "Germantown" and Cresheim. Divert your eyes from the English country-gentry attributes, from Chinese Chippendale, from the tales about old Madeira stocks, from the early hunt clubs and look into many an old Philadelphia family-name: you'll find the German origin.* Behind the façade of marvellous, pennypacking, Quaker-sounding 17th-century English names, a little historical scratching will reveal the heavy German plaster: Pfeiffer for Pepper, Pfannebäcker for Pennypacker. There is a German touch about Philadelphia food: cream cheese, scrapple, biscuits, and buns. Until about 1914 roaming German brass-bands were a local attraction on Sunday afternoons. Even the Philadelphia policemen look somewhat un-Irish: they wear a rather unbecoming octagonal white cap for the most part of the year. From their shoulders down they are American city cops, from their necks up they might as well be the beach patrol at Swinemünde. Philadelphia is also a brewery town: and the latest promotion is a *Steinie-Pak*.

The social patronage of culture has, again, a Germanic tinge. In at least two famous local autobiographies, the authors proudly point at their systematic determination to keep up with culture by the rather incredible method of keeping a weekly list of the number of pages read from different books. In Franklin's so scientific-serious societies, in Bayard Taylor's admiration for Goethe, in the sentimentalities of John Greenleaf Whittier, in the spirit of scholarship current during the relatively short efflorescence of the University of Pennsylvania (around 1910), in the fervour of certain patrician literati for Science, Anthropology, Excavations (one meets society matrons who, on parties, suddenly announce that they have just returned from a Yucatan or Iranian "dig") there gleams a Germanic respect for Knowledge,

* A significant exception were the early Philadelphia Jews, who seem to have been not German but Spanish and Portuguese in origin. Some of the oldest Philadelphia families, now Protestant, probably come from this Sephardic Jewish stock: Madeira, Seixas, Lavino, Markoe. The high social position of some of the Dutch and German Jews who came later is indicated by Rebecca Gratz, who inspired Scott's Rebecca in *Ivanhoe*. From the remarkable book of Nathan Glazer, *Judaism in America*, it appears that Philadelphia may have been the main bulwark of the old conservative and Sephardic tradition against the modernistic and secular tendencies of the later German-Russian Jewish immigrants. It should be also noted that, unlike anti-Catholicism, anti-Semitism as a visible and popular movement has never appeared in Philadelphia.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

immediately beneath the English veneer. It is a culture which patronises Russian musicians but which is insensitive to irony and is baffled by criticism; a stodgy culture with a radical tinge which will rather pay lip-service to Zola than bother with Flaubert. Unknown, too, are the best of Philadelphia's own. Agnes Repplier was one of the finest essayists of American literary history; she wrote the finest book about Philadelphia. This book, as most of her writings, is wholly forgotten to-day. Nor were her refined, conservative, patrician talents recognised by the allegedly so refined, conservative, patrician Philadelphians of her own day. Which, of course, is typical of Philadelphia. The same thing happened to another native Philadelphian, to that exceptional American painter, Thomas Eakins, about the same time: but Philadelphia has always favoured the second- if not the third-rate, due to a sort of provincial suspicion well hidden behind a successfully maintained pose of patrician reserve.

IT IS very easy to be deceived by this pose, as if it were the natural reserve of confident and cultural patricians. Here even the best observers slip a little; even Seán O'Faoláin who, in an otherwise excellent article written for *Holiday* magazine, said that Philadelphian patriciandom corresponds "to that great core of French society, the *grand bourgeois*—wealthy men of long lineage, whose conversation is also a blend of the good works of the conscience and the good things of life." I am rather inclined to agree with Hilaire Belloc who felt that the only thing he could do to enliven a Philadelphia dinner-party was to take off his shoes and dance a jig. I do not say that good talk cannot be found in Philadelphia; I only say that it is not very typical of Philadelphia. The same thing is true about other qualities attributed to local patrician refinement. It is well-known that, for a city of her size, Philadelphia is practically devoid of first-class restaurants. This is usually explained by Philadelphians by saying that Philadelphia is a "homey town" (which is true) and that it is among the private walls of old clubs and old homes that exceptionally good food may be found (which is not true). Among the younger generation of Philadelphia society families there are many men who would not be caught dead saying "suspenders" for "braces" but who have a very poor knowledge of even the essentials of wine. In a full-page colour photograph in that same *Holiday*, one of the oldest members of what is called the oldest social club of the English-speaking world—of the dreadfully exclusive Fish House or State In Schuylkill, devoted to fine cooking (the caption reads: "the ultra-select association gathers at its riverside Castle outside the city to feast on old traditions, good food . . .")—stands proudly posed against the blackboard where members write up the menu, which is as follows:

Boola-Boola Soup
Lamb Chops
Mint Jelly
Corn-off-the-Cob
Carrots
Lettuce and Tomatoes
Cheese and Crackers
Coffee

It is good and healthy and wholesome, but not what one would call a *grand bourgeois* menu.

Nor is it a Tory one. The cliché about Philadelphia being a "tory" city is quite off the mark, despite that happy breath of ease which visiting Englishmen get who always feel so much at home (since they are always welcomed) in Philadelphia. "Philadelphia is one of the few Tory cities left in the world," said a visiting English bishop not so long ago, "Birmingham being the other." He was curiously right about Philadelphian affinities with Birmingham, with that sort of puritan-radical philistinism, with the Toryism of the Chamberlains which, of course, is not really Toryism at all. The so-called patrician and conservative spirit of Philadelphia, if translated into English terms, comes closest to Gladstone. Gladstone would have been right at home here, while the Philadelphian reaction to a Disraeli or even to a pre-1940 Churchill would have been profound and un-

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

easy embarrassment. It is this embarrassment which lies behind the provincialism of Philadelphia "culture," despite the long traditions, the many excellent clubs and private libraries, the many widely read and highly cultured lawyers. It is this embarrassment which has resulted in a peculiar sort of local gracelessness: and, indeed, the history of Philadelphia may be summed up in saying that it represents the rise and decline of gentility without grace.

THERE is a decent, a cosy character in this American Gladstonism. It is there in Philadelphia architecture, even during the worst late-Victorian period: in the unimaginative but never really ugly brick rowhouses with their famous marble steps, representing the dogged determination to keep Philadelphia a "city of homes," which she has always been. Of course, by now the ranch house, in the form of a laminated cigarbox, appears all around Philadelphia, sordidly bespattering the lovely landscape of the Philadelphia suburbs. Yet in this so-called "conservative" city little is done to halt this scabrous development: for it represents, after all, "Progress." And the civic-spirited Philadelphian, whether rich or poor, Episcopalian, Quaker, Catholic, or Jewish, will do everything to avoid the impression of impeding "Progress."

But this deep-down Philadelphian uncertainty, this beating of the radical systole under the conservative face of the Philadelphia heart, is not new. The image of a Philadelphia full of stateliness and conservatism, breathing that reserved and patrician spirit into the so sensible Constitution of the United States is a very nice image: but it is, also, considerably false. The populace of this outwardly so placid city has broken out in some of the worst riots in American history, while the cowed "élite" kept judiciously silent. There was a Committee of Public Safety operating in Philadelphia fifteen years before the more infamous Parisian one: though the British occupation of the city during the winter of 1777–78 was, for reasons politic, remarkably gentle, there followed "an ignoble reign of terror" which, in the words of an American historian, "had not even the saving grace of mistaken enthusiasm." The mob demanded Tory heads, and the city fathers decided that the selection of a few victims was necessary "to appease the people." What may have been the worst religious riots in American history took place in Philadelphia in 1844, when Catholic churches were burned (significantly, only Irish Catholic churches; the German Catholics were spared by a population which, I hasten to add, numbered mostly anti-slavery voters). And during the height of the McCarthy wave in 1954 (when Philadelphia was universally hailed by liberals across the country for just having turned Democratic after almost seventy years of Republican city rule), an editorial writer in the Philadelphia *Bulletin*, weighed down by the overwhelmingly McCarthyite stream of letters coming in, helplessly asked: "What has happened to the people in Philadelphia?"

The standard attributions to Philadelphia ought, therefore, to be qualified. The "Englishness" is no longer unqualifiable (I was present when, in the best among the three Cricket Clubs still sported by Philadelphia, it was not possible to get a cup of tea on a summer afternoon.) The attribute of "patrician civic-mindedness" has been weakened long ago: for decades now, the Philadelphian élite have moved far out of the city (with the wholehearted approval of the machine politicians). Nor is the "conservative" attribute very valid to-day, when the main morning newspaper of this traditional city, of the erstwhile Athens of America, is the Philadelphia *Inquirer*, owned by an unscrupulous press magnate, and probably the worst morning paper of any great city in the Western Hemisphere. (The point is not that the *Inquirer* is scandalous: indeed, perhaps the first sensational scandalmongering paper in America, Duane's and Bache's radical *Aurora* was started in Philadelphia in 1800. The point is that in 1800 Philadelphia patricians and Pecksniffs sniffed at the *Aurora* with disgust, while their descendants take the *Inquirer* complacently for granted, as *the* classic Philadelphia morning paper.)

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

III

A CURIOUS feature in the modern history of Philadelphia is that she has been frequently just about twenty years behind the rest of the United States. It was during the Civil War that the great cities of the Eastern Seaboard went Republican; Philadelphia went Republican twenty years later, in 1884. The country went dry under Wilson; Pennsylvania was the only large state that voted for Hoover and for the drys in 1932. And it was twenty years later that Philadelphia's own New Deal arrived, turning out an entrenched and corrupt Republican administration. This local New Deal was headed by Richardson Dilworth, a vest-pocket Franklin Roosevelt. Like the national New Deal, the Philadelphia reform crusade swept in a coalition of civic-minded descendants of old local families, liberal lawyers, happy and corruptible ward-leaders, determined city planners, and a whole bevy of hard-faced sharp young men. And throughout the United States liberals, with their political ambitions parched in these seven lean years of the Republican-Eisenhower comeback, have depended on this trickle of a Philadelphia New Deal to slake the thirst of their anxious souls.

There is no doubt that the Democratic victory in Philadelphia marked a civic turning-point, and that many of its reforms were useful, overdue, important. But there is another side to its story. It is that, being twenty years behind the times (American times, that is), the Philadelphia New Deal has engaged in some of the same illusions and errors which now mark the Rooseveltian spirit in retrospect.* I shall not go into politics; I shall only suggest what this local New Deal has done to the face of Philadelphia. Ever since 1952, Philadelphia turned to hustle and bustle. There are whole batteries of city planners, entire flying brigades of public relations-men, official city ambassadors flying back and forth between Paris, Amsterdam, Monte Carlo, and Philadelphia (the very name of the city now being progressively obscured by the "official" slogan: DELAWARE VALLEY: U.S.A.). Big buses have replaced the trolleys (and the traffic situation is considerably worse); Inter-racial Non-Discrimination Commissions have been formed (and racial skirmishes have become much worse); Youth Study Centres and Community Centres have been built (and the juvenile delinquency situation has become very much worse). In some of the old side-streets the old and lovable gas lamps have been replaced by hideous aluminium dragons with fluorescent teeth, transforming the nocturnal landscape of this otherwise so placid city into a moonscape, into the anteroom of some gigantic atomic dentist. Old Broad Street Station and the so-called Chinese Wall were demolished; expressways bore deep into the clayey soil of Philadelphia; but it is by no means certain that the change is propitious. Despite its pompous exaltation, the new Penn Center in the middle of the city is really an esplanade of stiff-sack skyscrapers, about which many people have now second thoughts. They are office buildings which are not only unimaginative but outright ugly: large concrete bird-cages in the Bauhaus style of the 1930's; but, of course, the modern-angle functional architecture of the early 1930's has a way of growing out-of-date faster than the worst Gladstonian building.

Meanwhile there has been a tremendous surge of re-decoration, very much out of keeping with the older Philadelphia tradition of letting good (and, at times, also bad) enough alone. The lovely green Louis XV dining-room of the Barclay has been repainted in Mediterranean blue, with the mirrors removed, and Spanish iron grillwork mounted in their stead, in what may be called the Mrs. Luce style of 1956. There is a new hotel in the middle of Penn Center, the Sheraton, which opened with a tremendous hulla-

* A clear example is the article of the then new Democratic Mayor (now Senator) Joseph S. Clark, Jr., in the July 1953 *Atlantic Monthly* (*Can the Liberals Rally?*), full of nonsense, and loaded with the illusions of 1933. To prove the bankruptcy of American liberalism the "new conservatives" have been eagerly citing this article ever since. This is a pity, especially since Senator Clark is in reality a serious and principled politician, representing some of the best Philadelphian patrician qualities.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

balloo: Sherman Adams represented the President, Danny Kaye led the Philadelphia Orchestra (true!), with Philadelphia society gaily participating in this spectacle with the Gabor Sisters. It is a hotel where every detail is furnished in the most execrable taste.* Architecturally at least, the New Philadelphia Spirit may have already produced many a mad, if not sad, failure.

For the changing face reflects the changing spirit of this city. Indeed, the early impression according to which the Philadelphia New Deal meant a return of the old patrician interest in city affairs has largely evaporated now, when even the average resident of the Main Line is probably an advertising executive born in Cleveland. Advertising executives have already muscled their way into the Philadelphia civic front. It is now the ex-bricklayer John B. Kelly and the ex-Russian immigrant Albert Greenfield who might vie for the honour of being "Mr. Philadelphia." In this there is nothing wrong, except that in the past few years one heard many a joke cracked at the expense of Messrs. Kelly and Greenfield by some of the same old-Philadelphia-society people who were delighted to get invitations to that Monte Carlo wedding and who will not fail to attend Mr. Greenfield's very large New Year's receptions. It is somewhat like the attitude of those *ancien régime* families who, whatever their virtues, tried hard in 1800 to wangle invitations to Bonaparte's levées. And it is because of these things that by now it is quite an exaggeration to speak of the formative influence of Philadelphian patriciandom to-day.†

It is always at the height of the new tides of the democratic flood that nostalgic evocations of the old patrician habits appear. It was at the height of the national New Deal, in 1936, that John P. Marquand's *The Late George Apley* came out; and recently there has been a veritable literary preoccupation with themes about the Philadelphia "aristocracy": a brace of plays, a couple of pompous architectural articles, a string of novels of which perhaps the most typical is *The Philadelphian*. Written by an advertising executive, full of stereotypes of the proud-old-family theme, on its cover the silhouette of a man in a Brooks Brothers suit, it is also frequently in error about those details which are so essential in this kind of sociological literature. Now, when this image of Philadelphia (and no longer Boston or Southampton or whatnot) forming the last bulwark of American social aristocracy has emerged, it may be instructive to compare these literary representations with the portraits by a local writer coming from a patrician Philadelphia family, with the novels of Livingston Biddle Jr. who, after all, should know what he is writing about. In his books, and especially in his first, *Main Line*, the majority of the society people are warped, useless, snobbish, selfish (he seems to have a particular dislike for Main Line mothers), while he extols the virtues of a golden-hearted and manly proletarian, of a city-desk newspaperman. Moreover, while the other writers desperately labour to establish the image of an American past full of noble refinement, there is in Livingston Biddle's books a constant hankering after Europe. This is, of course, going to the opposite extreme; yet, no matter how overly sentimental the spirit in his books, they reflect something of the spirit of William Penn. And here I arrive at what may be the source of so many of these Philadelphia contradictions.

* Examples: There is a Connie Mack Room, with the rug in the form of a baseball diamond; a fake-Parisian outdoor café which bears the name of The Indian Queen and which, besides, is indoors; a Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese and a London Tavern where waiters wear red stocking-caps and emerald-green silk trousers, etc., etc.

† This is also true of the Philadelphia accent. Regional accents in the United States are rapidly disappearing and only traces of an English accent remain among upper-class Philadelphians (what I, for example, call the High Episcopalian "a"). There is, on the other hand, a formerly lower-class and, by now, middle-class Philadelphia accent which is among the ugliest forms of English diction. Its main mark is a flat, twangy, semi-nasal "a": i.e., "aysk," "mayd," and "clayss" for *ask, mad, class*. The most offensive and vulgar English diction I know is that of two Philadelphia radio disc-jockeys.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

IV

IT SEEMS that through the dim, grey, democratic years we can still distinguish the outlines of two figures that stand out against the receding past. It may be around them that all of these so contradictory Philadelphian impressions gather. For Philadelphia has a dual character, a split mind. Its character has been shaped partly by William Penn, partly by Benjamin Franklin. One was the contemplative humanitarian; the other the utilitarian eager-beaver. One, despite his brooding Quakerism, essentially an Englishman with an almost medieval soul; the other, despite his cosmopolitan repute at the French court, essentially the *bourgeois gentilhomme.* Penn was that peculiarly Anglo-Saxon case of the Rich Young Man Turned Humanist; Franklin was the more Germanic ideal, the Poor Apprentice who became a Famous Scientist. It is easy to imagine Franklin speaking to the Lions or addressing the Miss America contestants in Atlantic City; it is difficult to imagine Penn doing anything of the sort. The shy, the gentle, the introvert, the myrtle-and-brick Philadelphia, where houses are named Strawberry Mansion and Solitude, is that of William Penn. The city of the first utilitarian prison (a failure), of the concrete highways, of the anthropological institutes, of Art and Civic and Community Centres is that of Benjamin Franklin. Franklin represents perhaps the Philadelphia intellect, while Penn has given what is best to the Philadelphia heart. It is a pity that, by the 20th century, the great majority of Americans associate Philadelphia with Franklin rather than with Penn: in their minds the *Saturday Evening Post* is vaguely but indissolubly connected with such images as Independence Hall and Valley Forge.*

Penn was the founder; Franklin, after all, a newcomer; but it is by no means true that newcomers to Philadelphia have such a hard row to hoe. One of the worst disasters that befell Philadelphia came in the person of a man, Edward P. Bok, about sixty years ago. This Victorian Franklin, a young immigrant with heavy feet and with a lot of cheek, came to Philadelphia as an apprentice. With the help of a successful marriage he souped up the whole *Saturday Evening Post* complex, founded the *Ladies Home Journal*, made thereby Philadelphia a magazine city, established lecture forums, orchestras, Americanisation awards, and whatnot. He was the civic-minded eager-beaver at its worst. He also represented the Franklin spirit at its worst. But even at its best, the Philadelphia tradition has something of the Franklin spirit. The radicalism of the enlightened scoutmaster breaks through the patrician surface. It is in the Foreword of the autobiography of the otherwise so admirable George Wharton Pepper, written in 1944, that I read: "Perhaps it is only *wishful thinking*, but my belief is that as America goes so will go the world." The italics are mine: they wish to emphasise that these were not the words of a radical Wilsonian but of an isolationist, of perhaps the most eminent and most conservative Philadelphia lawyer.

Yet, perhaps because of its often so vapid nature, the Franklin influence does not always endure. It is hardly known that whereas Penn's original constitution for Pennsylvania is an extraordinarily sensible document, the constitution which Franklin drew up during the Revolution had to be discarded within a few years. At first sight, compared to the sensitive Penn, Dr. Franklin seems to represent the great American virtue of robust common sense. At closer examination, however, this impression rapidly disappears. Somehow, somewhere, the tolerant spirit of Penn, less in the form of an image than in the sense of an instinct, meanwhile continues to prevail. His peculiar mixture of pallid purposefulness, of deep-seated melancholy hidden behind the benevolent vigour of action, is the mysterious

* They have a point. Before me lies a picture of the Independence Hall restoration project, a "Prospective view of future development recommended by the Philadelphia National Shrines Park Commission." It is an instructive picture. In it, Independence Hall is a well-scrubbed, lovable toy, a colonial doll's house in the shade of the monstrous, twelve-storey façade of the Curtis Magazine Building, housing the *Saturday Evening Post* and the *Ladies Home Journal*. And across the square are the new, air-conditioned offices of *Holiday*.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

inheritance of Philadelphia to this day.

It endured through the years when brownstone castles and Masonic Cathedrals were erected in the middle of the city, and when a tremendous iron-and-marble civic cathedral was built to honour poor Penn in the form of a monstrous City Hall. Yet even at that time, in "corrupt and contented" Philadelphia, it bred manly virtues stronger than those of the present, liberal-politic, city-planner generation. It is true that around 1900 the touch was Germanic, and they drank schooners of beer to the Boers, but they also read Kipling and their image of England was not represented by the Schweppesman. From books, walking in town, talking to old lawyer friends of my Philadelphian father-in-law, I can still sense that cigar-smoke, the steamed clams, the cracking jokes, that red-cheeked, gartered, democratic touch of easy-handed corruption but also of easy-minded tolerance, the smell of the sea in the little restaurants (so unlike the modern drugstore smell of restaurants), the high whistle of the Reading locomotives (unlike the false beep of to-day's Pennsylvania diesels). It was a Philadelphia world all very different from Penn, and yet still closer to his large tolerant spirit than to the little crackerjack rules of Benjamin Franklin. This was fifty years ago; and since then the voice of Benjamin Franklin had become the Voice of America; but somehow, here and there, the unspoken voice of William Penn still echoes in Philadelphia.

David Wright

November 1956

Stirrup to stirrup, not authority, but
Paid for by power
(And like, as the world over, expensive bars
Are like each other,

Some vicious, some not, but the same boredom
And more or less expense)
I see the stupid bearing down the stupid
By a glum residence

Of government: police, mounted in pride
Of delegated
Licence to violence, and disciplined,
Break the egotistic.

Sparkling down Whitehall I perceive the riding
Guardians of obedience
—A loose illusory crowd dispersing
Moral coincidence—

Each "I want" scrubbed out by a bigger "We
Have now decided."
Whatever the question or the capital,
Here as I see it

Is impotence of the individual
For love or hate;
Yet, above that impotence, the voluble
Combine of state

Unable with batons, horses, guns, machines
For a cry "I" I cry.
Valid in bleak formation stroll the hosts,
Absolute today;

Valid in bleak formation: and, viable,
Harmless among smoke,
A broken person clutching at a broken
Promise to speak or break.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Guillaume Apollinaire

The Song of the Ill-Loved

(La Chanson du Mal-Aimé) *Translated by Oliver Bernard*

To Paul Léautaud

I was singing this romance
In 1903 *not knowing my*
Love is like the Phoenix if
One fine evening he should die
Morning sees him born again

ONE night of London mist and flame
A corner boy who looked like my
Lover came up and asked my name
But what I saw in that one's eye
Made me lower mine in shame

I followed this young dog who hands
In pockets whistled as he went
That street became the Red Sea sands
Open for him the Jews and meant
To drown me Pharaoh all my bands

Let these piled bricks fall ton on ton
If I did not love you then
I am a King of Egypt's son
His sister-Queen and all their men
If you are not the only one

At the corner of a street
That burned with all its signs alight
Like sores that fogs and acids eat
In old housefronts that weep all night
Like him but for her faltering feet

It was her utterly inhuman
Look the scar across her neck
Came out of this pub drunk that woman
Just as I saw the final wreck
Of human love and all that's human

When at last wise Ulysses came
Back to his country and his home
His old hound remembered him
And standing by her long-worked loom
His wife awaited his return

And Sakuntala's royal mate
Weary of victories was glad
To find her pale from the long wait
And pale for love stroking her sad-
Eyed male gazelle within the gate

Of those thrice-happy kings I thought
When that false love and she whom I
Still love like shrieking harpies fought
Whose clamour darkened all the sky
And made my happiness a nought

On such regrets men found a hell
Come heaven of forgetfulness
Open to me earth's kings would sell
Their kingdoms gladly for her kiss
And their unlucky souls as well

I winter in my past come back
Bright Easter sunshine warm this heart
Chilled like towns Tamburlaine left black
And smoking pyres seen miles apart
Less martyrised than on my rack

Oh memory my lovely ship
When will our voyaging be done
In waters dangerous to sip
As wandering from our course we run
From dawn's bright to night's filthy lip

Farewell to that false love who wore
The likeness of the woman who
Resembled her I lost before
In Germany to both of you
For I shall never see her more

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Oh milky way bright sister to
The chalk streams of the Promised Land
And white bodies of girls in love
We follow hard hold out a hand
Lead us to farther nebulae

I remember another year
It was an April dawn I sang
My joy in her who was so dear
To me and singing my voice rang
Bells in the tender time of year

SONG FOR LAETARE A YEAR PAST

Here's spring again come out and see
Come and be flowers in the wood
The courtyard hens scold you and me
Dawn ruffles the grey sky with rose
Love cries who'll conquer if not he

Mars and Venus are come again
Their mouths are mad with kissing they
Lie embracing openly
Where rose-coloured dance and play
Naked gods and roses climb

Come see my love is queen of this
Flowering of all green things
Nature's all love and tenderness
And in the forest great Pan sings
The frogs are croaking their gladness

Many of those gods are dead
It is for them the willows weep
Pan Eros Jesus Christ all dead
The cats miaow I sit and weep
In Paris how the gods are dead

I who know lays fit for queens
And elegies for all my past
Dirges for slaves thrown to the eels
This song of the ill-loved and last
The sirens' chant and what it means

I tremble love is dead for I
Have worshipped idols all my life
Love's memories are like him I cry
Am plaintive as Mausolus' wife
Who wept because he had to die

And I am faithful as a dog
Or as the ivy to the oak
Or the Cossacks of Zapur-Og
Who drank and robbed in holy smoke
Of incense steppes and decalogue

My loyal Zapur-Og Cossacks
The Sultan's letter thus began
Come yoke the crescent to your backs
The mystic crescent no one can
Divine the astrologer's axe

My dazzled subjects I am yours
Omnipotently the Sultan
When they had read it there were roars
Of laughter and one of them ran
For ink and candle to their stores

REPLY OF THE ZAPUR-OG COSSACKS TO THE SULTAN OF CONSTANTINOPLE

Worse than Barrabas what beast
With devil's horns are you down there
Beelzebub at very least
Feed on your filth stay in your lair
We shall not keep your bloody feast

That stinking swollen Black Sea trout
That succubus your mother clung
Your father dreamed his eyes gouged out
And you were dropped amidst her dung
Thus were you born without a doubt

Hangman to all Podolia
Great Lover revelling in pox
Damp groin of pig black hole of mare
Hang on to your old moneybox
Smear some expensive ointment there

Oh milky way bright sister to
The chalk streams of the Promised Land
And white bodies of girls in love
We follow hard hold out a hand
Lead us to further nebulae

I think of that sleek harlot's eyes
A panther among women placed
Ah love the Florentine surprise
Of kisses whose sharp bitter taste
Our Fates could hardly recognise

Her looks sowed stars in the pale twilight
Two sirens swam in her eyes' deep
And when we kissed with bruise and bite
Our fairy godmothers would weep
And we would make them weep all night

But really my only care
Is hoping to see her again
And if on that bridge of Despair
I see that woman's face again
I'll say to her I'm glad she's there

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

My head and heart are emptying
Into a sky empty of pain
O daughters of the Argive king
How to be happy once again
How is it that the children sing

I pray I never may forget
My dove my white harbour my
Daisy that's all heart and yet
White my island in the sky
Rose white and white stock dew wet

And on this pain let Pan and all
His satyrs dance and marsh lights glare
And let a plague of locusts fall
And damned souls with a gallows stare
All my misery appal

Pain that adds pain to death and makes
A unicorn and capricorn
Where the soul in its body shakes
To flee the place where maids adorn
With asphodels the funeral stakes

Bad luck pale god with ivory eyes
Your mad priests have put black robes on
The innocents you victimise
And they have wept in vain and gone
But your religion is all lies

And you who follow me to make
Sure I do not exceed the span
Given to me on earth I take
Care old shadow of a man
Dead god of all my gods old snake

Remember how because I see
You love the sunshine best I've led
You here and there and home with me
My nothing-husband whom I've wed
My morning-shadow mourning me

Winter has lain in snow and died
They've burned the hives for honey in
The orchards and the robins cried
In the branches where the thin
Leaves are green with April's pride

The silver armies of the snows
Have fallen to find death at last
Before the bearers of green boughs
Poor people glad that winter's past
Smile with blue and watery eyes

My heart's as heavy as hips such
As set Damascus girls apart
Oh my love I have loved too much
And now have too much hurt my heart
Feels seven stabs at every touch

Now the seven swords of sadness
Razor sharp and bright with pain
Are in my heart and in my madness
Reason seeks relief in vain
For how can I forget the gladness

THE SEVEN SWORDS

All silver is the first called by
A bright and trembling name PALINE
Its blade a snowfilled winter sky
Its bloody quarrel Ghibelline
Forging it Vulcan learned to die

Second the rainbow-coloured gift
Of a hunchbacked fairy serves
As wedding arch to gods they lift
Over gods NOUBOSSE whose curves
Cut thirty heads off in the Rift

The third is blue as milkveins are
But no less bloodthirsty for that
LUL DE FALTENIN stained in war
Bears etched with acid on its flat
L'Hermes Ernest dwarfed by a star

The fourth MALOURENE is a river
Green and gold it is the hour
When river daughters bathe at evening
Naked as goddesses and our
Prayers are rowers' songs on the water

Fifth SAINTE FABEAU no lovelier
Tapers a spindle than this steel
A cypress on a sepulchre
Where four winds meet at dusk and kneel
Each night it is a flame of fire

The sixth is forged of bravery
It is the gentle-handed one
We part with every morning see
This is your road farewell the sun
Called up the cock-crows endlessly

And the seventh sword of all
Fainting woman's flesh dead rose
Welcome then the last of all
See that on my love you close
The door we never met at all

Oh milky way bright sister to
The chalk streams of the Promised Land
And white bodies of girls in love
We follow hard hold out a hand
Lead us to farther nebulae

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The fiddles of demons of chance
In the undying song of stars
With dying falls compel us dance
Our human race pursued by Mars
Runs backward as the years advance

Impenetrable destinies
Mad kings all mad with shaking heads
The stars are shivering in the skies
False wives are shivering in your beds
In deserts choked with histories

Does the old regent Luitpold
Guardian to mad princes weep
Thinking of them drowned and cold
Summer evenings when the deep
Green shadows dance with drops of gold

There was no castle captain on
The turret of the castle by
The wide white lake windblown and wan
Where bargemen sang under the sky
And bark swam siren and sang swan

And when the king drowned in the silver
Water and swam back to shore
With open mouth he slept his eyelids
Closed his face for evermore
Turned to the turning changing skies

Oh burning lyre of the June sun
Burning my fingers as I go
In singing and delirium
All over Paris and find no
Place where I have the heart to die

Sundays here are ages long
The hurdy gurdies sob within
The grey courtyards a tired song
Under balconies that lean
With flowers like towers of Pisa hung

Evenings in Paris soaked in gin
Flaming with electricity
The trams rock show rearlights of green
Tramrails are bars of music they
Play with the frenzy of machines

With clouds of smoke the cafes swell
And cry the love their gipsies feel
And siphons cough and hiss to tell
White loinclothed waiters shout and reel
Towards you you I have loved so well

I who know lays fit for queens
And elegies for all my past
Dirges for slaves thrown to the eels
This song of the ill-loved and last
The sirens' chant and what it means

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Erich Heller

The Conservative Imagination

On Thomas Mann's "Non-Political" Meditations

Editors' Note:—This essay, in a slightly altered form, will be included in Erich Heller's forthcoming book on Thomas Mann (The Ironic German, *to be published by Messrs. Martin Secker and Warburg, London*). *The chapter from which it is taken deals with Thomas's Mann's political philosophy, and in particular with the conservatism and nationalism of the as yet untranslated* Meditations of a Non-Political Man, *the autobiographical confessions he wrote during the First World War. Introducing this extract, Erich Heller writes: "Going back, after many years, to Thomas Mann's* Meditations of a Non-Political Man, *and expecting to have the quiet time of a student mildly enjoying himself with the contemplation of passions spent and problems outdated, I was amazed to find myself in a welter of contemporary agitations. For this book is a sustained discussion of æstheticism (by which Thomas Mann means the philosophy of life which comes most 'naturally' to the artist) and moral commitment (which also implies political commitment). His polemic against his brother Heinrich, whom he introduces under the name of* Zivilisationsliterat, *the literary champion of 'civilisation'—a word into which the German language has managed to gather the combined distaste felt by Nature, and Rousseau, and Herder, and D. H. Lawrence, for the rationalistic, high-minded and shallow-spirited planners and levellers of existence, long before Spengler came to use the term as meaning the death of* Kultur—*is centred upon the very problem of literature and* engagement. *Thomas Mann's question is: how authentic are Heinrich's radical politics, how genuine are his anti-conservative convictions, how pure is the morality of his conscientious objection to the political traditions of his own country?*

THE belief underlying Thomas Mann's polemic against the *Zivilisationsliterat* is that the artist is condemned to a subtle kind of insincerity in his proclaimed opposition to the "world." There is, above all, his inescapable "æsthetic opportunism." He wishes to please. What ultimately matters to him is success—not necessarily, of course, in the crudest but certainly in the most fastidious sense of the word: success as that delicious contentment achieved in the perfection of a sentence, the happy appropriateness of a cadence, the finality of a metaphor. Beliefs and opinions—what are they to him but material for the grand æsthetic artifice, "matter to be consumed by form," as Schiller once defined the æsthetic process. What pleases him more than the goodness of one conviction, is the splendid clash of two. For, as Keats said, "the poetical Character . . . has no character. . . . It has as much delight in conceiving an Iago as an Imogen. What shocks the virtuous philosopher delights the chameleon Poet." The artist is concerned to move men through beauty, not to convince them of truth. He woos even with his aggression, seduces even with his chastity, seeks the admiration of those he dooms in his apocalyptic visions, and the applause of those he damns with his last judgments. If the artist's dealings with thoughts, convictions, or opinions must needs be dubious, responsive as he is not to their "truth" but to their æsthetic equivalent, then all his political "commitments" must be flawed by irresponsibility: the responsible artist is a political sceptic; and political scepti-

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cism is, according to *Meditations*, the characteristic attitude of the conservative mind.

"*Bellezza* radicalism" is Thomas Mann's name for the irresponsible politics of the æsthete seized by political enthusiasm. What the *bellezza* radical lacks is conscience. For his doctrine "that art must now have *consequences*," political consequences, is merely his disingenuous manner of saying that now he expects to score new and topically sensational *effects*. "The political artist is of all artists the one most anxious to be *effective*"—above all artistically effective, even with his revolutionary manifestos. And he *knows* it; knows that opinions count for nothing in the æsthetic sphere, and knows that he will be most readily forgiven his political blunders. "What does it matter that he was wrong?" people will ask, and add: "He said it so beautifully. Let him sing once again!"

Lacking conscience, is he an artist at all? asks Thomas Mann. No, he is a mere æsthete. Yet "æstheticism" is also the fate of the true artist, and Thomas Mann's struggle with the problems of the æsthetic existence is the most absorbing and bewildering aspect of his *Meditations*. This will hardly surprise us if we think of the troubles and dooms he had decreed for his artists Hanno Buddenbrook, Tonio Kröger, and Gustav Aschenbach. Nor is it inconsistent that "æstheticism" now fulfils a double task: it vindicates, on the one hand, the artist's conservatism, and vitiates, on the other, the æsthete's radicalism. For the political æsthete fraudulently aspires to a moral status above his native moral means. If only he had the conscience of the artist, he would know that his "radical beliefs" must needs lack authenticity, and that it was his moral duty to observe the utmost tact and restraint in dealing with the "real" world. What Thomas Mann says of the æsthetic politician, Kierkegaard before him had said of the "æsthetic priest." The poet, Kierkegaard wrote, is by his very nature a spiritual menace—and he saw the poet with all but the eyes of Aschenbach; yet a far greater danger (for the poet, after all, does not want to be more than a poet) is a priest who is at heart only a little artist advertising as "belief" what is in fact a mere play of the imagination with "imaginative truths." "This is hypocrisy raised to the second power." It is exactly such hypocrisy with which Thomas Mann charges the *Zivilisationsliterat*, the political æsthete, the writer who is so much in earnest because he is not seriously concerned with the hazards of the æsthetic existence.

THOMAS MANN himself is untiringly concerned. He has ransacked whole libraries and filled page after page of *Meditations* with the most apposite extracts from the literature of the world, to make the case of æstheticism. He quotes Goethe, Schiller, Flaubert, Tolstoy, Strindberg, and to particularly good effect Turgenev, who once confessed that he felt always a little lost when asked to give his own opinion on this or that, and deprived of the chance of hiding behind the exchanges of imaginary characters: "Then it always seems to me that one might just as well and with equal right assert the opposite of what I am saying. But if I talk about a red nose or fair hair, well, then the hair is fair and the nose is red, and no amount of reflection will reflect it away." But Thomas Mann's chief witness is, of course, Schopenhauer, who said of the æsthetic imagination that it works on the principle of Nature herself; and

> "Nature does not do as those bad writers do, who, when they show a knave or a fool, set about it so full of clumsy purpose that behind every such figure we glimpse, as it were, the writer himself, disavowing their minds and words, and warning us with a raised finger: 'This is a knave, this is a fool; do not listen to what he says!' No, Nature does as Shakespeare and Goethe do, in whose work every person, and be it the Devil himself, is, while he speaks, in the right; because he is conceived so objectively that we are compelled to sympathise with him: for he has, like a product of Nature, grown from an inner principle, by virtue of which everything he says and does appears as natural and therefore necessary."

This, then, is Thomas Mann's highly respectable (and highly unorthodox) definition of æstheticism: it is the contemplation of

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the world *sub specie necessitatis*, a definition which not only seeks to establish the profoundly "conservative" and "non-political" character of art (and throughout *Meditations* this "non-political man" equates the political mind with the radical mind, convinced as he is that it is an inescapable contemporary equation). It is a definition which implies even more: it raises art to the level of religion. For under this ambitious aspect art, like religion, is concerned with an ultimate affirmation. As religion affirms the ultimate goodness of what is truly necessary, so art affirms its ultimate beauty. The opposite of necessity, thus understood, is contrivance. Hence there is neither goodness nor beauty in what is contrived, and the æsthete differs from the artist in that he is, as a practitioner of his craft, a contriver of æsthetic sensations and, as a political enthusiast, a contriver of unauthentic moral satisfactions. For the morality of what Thomas Mann calls æstheticism lies in the conscientious contemplation of what *is*, not of what might be enjoyed or might be done; and he quotes Goethe's saying that only the contemplative man has a conscience: the active man is always without it. Only in the creations of the artist, Thomas Mann adds, is the dilemma resolved: his work is active contemplation, not contemplated action. And as the *Zivilisationsliterat* has accused the "non-political man" of irresponsible relativism and scepticism, he replies that he is not guilty of such intellectual frivolities; what he has is respect—respect for that which is; and doubt—doubt of those magniloquent abstractions from reality to which the æsthetic politician is "committed." "Respect *and* doubt," he asks, "to be conscientious *and* uncommitted—does this combination exist? Indeed it does, and is the essence of the æsthetic philosophy."

II

IF ONLY this were the whole truth! The non-political man could then conclude his meditations at this point, return to his business, and produce another work of art. Yet, like the war itself, the desperate self-defence seems to go on forever—for many hundreds of pages. Why? Kierkegaard, in his critique of the æsthetic philosophy, knew one of the answers when he wrote (as if he had read *Tonio Kröger* and *Death in Venice*): "I know very well that an artist, who simply follows his talent without asking himself what it means to be a man, commands much admiration. But the admirers of his work forget *him*. For I also know that he leads a tragic life. His tragedy is that ethically he remains unrealised, a nonentity." And Kierkegaard knows still more: that even the most ardent ethical aspiration of the æsthetic man will be halted by his very æstheticism at the stage of "living ironically." What condemns *Meditations* to their agonisingly sustained inconclusiveness is precisely this: that their author is caught in the paradoxical enterprise of *establishing irony as a mode of ethical and even religious existence*. He is, as Tonio Kröger protested, "no nihilist," nor has he, as *Meditations* make clear, any time for such "intellectual frivolities" as relativism and scepticism. If he is not "committed," it is due to his respect for the truth of life and his conscientious doubt of the "truths" offered by believers. Yet what is it that he himself believes in? In conscientious æsthetic contemplation—in Art. But is not Art precisely the thing which *Buddenbrooks*, *Tonio Kröger*, and *Death in Venice* have besieged with hosts of moral questions? Is not the artist precisely the man whom Tonio Kröger and Felix Krull have made into a relation of the criminal and the impostor, and of whom Gustav Aschenbach has learned that, moralist or not, he "heads for the abyss"? And what about his separation from life, his being exiled, by a law of the spirit, from the community of morally sound and healthy people? It is obviously no simple task to bring *Meditations* to an end.

Even if the precarious æsthetic play on the verge of "nihilism" and moral catastrophe—the theme of *Buddenbrooks*, *Tonio Kröger*, and *Death in Venice*—is now dismissed as a "youthfully romantic affectation" (an act of grave injustice Thomas Mann does not only to the seriousness of his past work but also to

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the future *Doctor Faustus*) there still remains the artist's isolation, the supreme *moral* problem about which all his literary ancestors have been in a perpetual state of dynamic worry. For one of the obsessive themes of German literature is the conversion of souls from their self-consuming inwardness to a redeeming concern with the community. The great Faust himself is carried into Heaven as soon as he conquers the devilish pride of his lonely pursuits, diverting his "eternal striving" to the common good. Tasso is snatched from the poetic abyss by the statesman in his common sense. And *Wilhelm Meister* has set the whole genre of *Bildungsroman* on that course which invariably leads from the solitary excesses of sensibility to the nobly restraining acceptance of social purpose. Will Thomas Mann defy the hereditary national pattern, deteriorated as it has in the hands of contemporary designers—the political æsthetes? The answer is, as it is so often with him, yes and no; but his manner of eating and having the national cake in *Meditations* merits closer inspection, not only because all his future work reflects the insoluble dilemma, but also because a whole hungry epoch would seem to assist in the paradoxical procedure.

AGAINST the social moralism of the *Zivilisationsliterat*, Thomas Mann indeed insists upon the unconquerable "isolation" and even fundamental "self-centredness" of the æsthetic man; but despite all his moral scruples, he now attributes, in a kind of religious bravado, superior ethical value to this morally questionable state. For if the æsthetic man is isolated, if he refuses to play the game of people who all "know what they want" and unproblematically "take sides," this is not a matter of choice. He is under compulsion. What compels him is the æsthetic vision of that which necessarily is, of a wholeness of being in which all the moral clashes and contradictions of individual men are both contained and surpassed. His ethics, therefore, are the ethics of "being," not the morals of "doing." He may appear—to others as well as to himself—as one concerned with himself alone. But this is an illusion caused by the fact that he cannot have any seriously felt concern for the arbitrary fluctuations of the social dispute. Instead, his isolation has an opening into religion. And he quotes Nietzsche's saying: "A religious man thinks only of himself." As the *Zeitgeist* is an incorrigible plagiarist, he could, had he known him, have quoted still more appropriately Kierkegaard, who said of the truly ethical state (which in his order of spiritual growth precedes the religious state) that "as soon as a person reflects upon himself ethically, and demands of himself that he should exist ethically, he is instantaneously isolated. Then he does not bluster of millions and generations and, at random, of mankind—as little as the police ever arrest the essence of humanity. Ethics is concerned with the particular human being." For Kierkegaard too knew the literary champion of civilisation: "Well informed as he is, he knows his orders. His orders are: the complete transformation of the world. But he has got it wrong. The order is: complete transformation of himself."

It is the very order with which Thomas Mann counters the civilising transformers of society: whole pages of *Meditations* might have been prompted by Kierkegaard's brilliant scorn at the unregenerate believers in regeneration through revolutionary politics. For to Thomas Mann too, "the people" is opium for the man without religion. "No social religiosity," Thomas Mann writes, "can bring conciliation to the life of society. Only true religion could do that. . . ." Yet has he himself "true religion"? And where will he find, in his æsthetic isolation, that "faith in the reality of the Other"—the "infinite interest" of Kierkegaard's "religious man"? Or even the "common purpose," the traditional salvation of the hero of a German *Bildungsroman*?

III

AT THE troubled heart of *Meditations of a Non-Political Man* lies a religious imagination and religious conscience in conflict with a sceptical mind—the deepest source of Thomas Mann's irony. It is a state of

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

spiritual affairs radically different from that to which so many a Victorian sage had to attend "with terrible earnestness," as, for instance, George Eliot on that solemn Cambridge occasion in the Fellows' Garden of Trinity when, according to F. W. H. Myers's report, she pronounced that God was inconceivable, Immortality unbelievable, but Duty peremptory and absolute, and left her companion gazing "on a sanctuary with no Presence to hallow it, and heaven left lonely of God." This is the pronouncement of a mind formed by religion and now earnestly embattled with a sceptical imagination and a rational conscience. The difference lies in that which appeals to the imagination and engages the passion of the mind. The course which the intellectual history of Europe has taken since those Victorians fought their battles of conscience makes it difficult to grasp the true nature of their dilemma. But of many of them it is true to say that the idea of rationality wielded an *imaginative* spell stronger than that of the religion which had formed their minds, and that their moral conscience was employed by a vaguely conceived ideal of scientific truth. Not since the days of the Enlightenment had the passions been so enamoured of Reason, and the sense of rational truth been so tyrannical in its dealings with the conscience.

The writer of *Meditations*, on the other hand, would in perfect gladness part company with his sceptical mind, if only he could bargain for its rationality the undisturbed possession of the religious truth which his imagination woos. Conscience forbade George Eliot to believe in God. Belief, for her, was the "natural," the unregenerate, condition. To Thomas Mann unbelief comes "naturally" and is almost the guilty state, while Duty tells him that the sanctuary should be hallowed by the Presence, and conscience that the imagination should be right: and to his imagination God is not inconceivable, and Immortality not unbelievable. Both inconceivable and unbelievable to him is, on the contrary, the attachment of "belief" to the rational virtues—as if "belief" could be the proper attitude of mind towards that which is either self-evident or knowable. And what he dreads is the rationalist faith in its state of degeneracy: the faith of the metropolitan backwoodsmen in the redeeming power of political ideologies, the hankering for salvation diverted to that which can be "reasonably" attained—and will, on the strength of this spiritual derangement, be most unreasonably bungled. He calls it "the betrayal of the Cross," a distasteful substitute for true belief. But what is the true belief? Certainly it is not to be found in "the obstinate and rhetorical advocacy" of just any doctrine, such as that of "Liberty, Equality, Democracy, Civilisation, and Progress." What is it, then?

The answer comes as a shock: "It is the belief in God." At this point, however, Thomas Mann engages in an evasive manœuvre which, without weakening his religious appetite, does nothing to increase his religious resources. The passage continues: "Yet what is God? Is it not the comprehensive vision, the principle of form, the omniscient justice, the love affirming everything that is?" These are words lifted from another context and rhetorically adjusted to the religious purpose. They come from the exposition of the æsthetic philosophy which, as we have seen, holds that the artist is barred from any particular belief by that comprehensive vision, the passion for affirming whatever can be made to yield to the principle of form, and by that boundless justice which gives assent to everyone who in the drama of the imagination speaks his own particular truth—"and be it the Devil himself." And promptly Thomas Mann concludes his theological discourse with the words: "Belief in God is the belief in love, in life, and in art." Held against the tenets of the æsthetic philosophy, this amounts to saying that faith in God is the faith in unbelief, while belief is "the betrayal of the Cross."

And he does say it. "I cannot say that I believe in God, and even if I did believe, it would be a long time before I said so." He doubts, and even believes in doubt, for doubt is better than a false belief. He even believes in despair, for "despair is a more religious

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

condition than the mellifluous religiosity of the revolutionary optimist." Thus, from the depth of his unbelief, Thomas Mann religiously denounces the heretical believer. For belief is belief in the wrong thing. And morality and social virtue? To the profounder inner life, sin is a more moral experience than the virtuousness contrived and secured by a virtuous organisation of society. Thus, from the depth of his inwardness, he religiously denounces the propagandist of virtue. For virtue is a stupid and feeble goodness if it is unexercised and unenlightened by evil. Such is the conscientious irony begotten by the sceptical mind in the religious imagination: the irony of a religious conscience without spiritual employment, and the irony of an intense inwardness without moral direction.

Both "ironies" had done their destructive work in *Death in Venice* where Gustav Aschenbach's creative labour was inspired by a moral determination unaided and unmellowed by faith; and this was also the favourite theme of his books. And in *Meditations* Thomas Mann entirely identifies himself with Aschenbach's foremost literary fascination: "If I have," he writes, "understood anything of my time sympathetically, then it is its particular kind of heroism, the form of existence . . . proper to the moralist of accomplishment who, overestrained and overexercised, works on the verge of exhaustion." And beyond this marginal morality there lurks the other irony, the morally undirected inwardness, which unscrupulously invaded and destroyed Aschenbach's life, just as it had brought about the downfall of Thomas Buddenbrook who, having exhausted the ethos of achievement, surrendered to the raptures of Schopenhauer's metaphysics of death. It is, however, in *Meditations of a Non-Political Man* that Thomas Mann has created the largest hero in whom to embody the soul divided in itself between the faith-less ethos and the a-moral inwardness: Germany, the country of the unquestioning discipline and the undisciplined ecstasies, of soldiers and mystics, of the desire to possess the world and the urge to withdraw from it into lyrical privacy, of engineering and romantic music, of aggressive energy and metaphysical excess. Germany—and this is the point at which the "ethically isolated individual," the "æsthetic sensibility exiled from society" conquers, in accordance with the Faustian pattern, its isolation and its exile, and finds its redeeming "Other," yet without having to surrender its proud miseries and glories. It has found its—appropriately interpreted—community: the ethically isolated country, exiled by virtue of its æsthetic sensibility from the society of nations. Yet this is also the point at which the anguished attempt to make the æsthetic philosophy into a form of religious existence breaks down in anguish—that anguish which years later was to assume its final literary form in *Doctor Faustus*.

IV

THE writer of *Meditations* is a latecomer in the procession of illustrious minds wedded in spiritual and unhappy marriage to Germany. If ever the history of Germany and her lovers comes to be written, it will be as full of passion, intrigue, disinheritance, adultery, jealousy, and murder, as the history of fiction. And fiction is what it will be about, good fiction and very bad fiction. No other Western secular society, in the late 18th and 19th centuries, suffered so much from the traumatic craving for the vanished Holy Empire, and took so badly to the rational-legalistic conception of the State which has found its extreme formulation in the *Contrat social*. Not contract but sacrament, not *commune* but communion—this remained the vain aspiration. The German mind clung obstinately to the idea of the State as an incarnation of the religious spirit, and when the religious spirit had irretrievably lost its concrete Christian articulation, its luminous fragments were assembled in a mosaic displaying all the mythologies accessible to historical fiction, above all the Greek and Teuton mythologies. Their mysterious essence, poetically distilled, had to supply the spiritual flavour which was to make social existence acceptable to souls in-

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tent upon religious meaning. Hölderlin's *Hyperion* is the noblest expression of the agony of minds in search of a nation ready to house the genii, and Hegel's philosophy the grandest intellectual design to bestow the luminosity of the spirit upon the secular history of man.

It is perhaps impossible satisfactorily to account for this striking German disposition. One of its causes (which, of course, is again "caused") may be, as has often been suggested and not least by Thomas Mann, the Reformation which re-kindled, more so in Germany than anywhere else, medieval religious passions, and at the same time thwarted, through its radical emphasis upon the inward faith of the individual, man's sense of a meaningful worldly society: so that the faithful inwardness, when it began to lose its hold upon the divine partner, turned to "the people" in quest of new spiritual company and of deliverance from the lonely religious plight. This is the way Hölderlin went. Kleist knew the temptation. The very tone of voice in which Fichte addressed the German Nation betrays this state of mind, which almost found its systematic theology in the political theories of the Romantics. Sought after by such sublime desire, "the people," of course, had to be found wanting. But the indignation at its shortcomings hardly ever takes the form of social criticism; it is almost always uttered with the wrath and pathos of prophecy—at times even by the ironical Heine. Not since the Old Testament has there been a national record so full of messianic hope and apocalyptic despair engendered by the state and conduct of the nation.

It is well-nigh impossible to read what, throughout the 19th century, articulate Germans have to say about Germany, without forming the impression that it is a country which, inhabited entirely by problems, lives in a state of constant expectancy, waiting for their transcendent solution. From Friedrich Schlegel's seeing in Germany's present "only the germ of a great future age" when "things will come to pass among our people such as never did in human history," to the young Nietzsche's discovering, "hidden beneath the unquiet life of our culture, a glorious power" which "will stir into the open in a tremendous moment," the voice of Germany pronounces its ominous "Not yet." Even a much later Nietzsche, the Nietzsche of *Beyond Good and Evil*, is prompted by Wagner's music—"once again, and yet as if for the first time" he has heard the overture to *Meistersinger*—to observe: "This kind of music expresses best what I think of the Germans: they are of the day before yesterday and of the day after tomorrow. To-day has not yet come." The suggestion of this strange national destiny must indeed be compelling if also Karl Marx, so little given to generalisations of this sort, remarks: "As the ancient peoples experienced their past through their imagination, their mythology, so we Germans experience our future through our thought, our philosophy. We are philosophical contemporaries of the present without being its historical contemporaries. German philosophy is the ideal extension into the future of German history."

OF COURSE, he was a Hegelian, and "we Germans," says Nietzsche, "would be Hegelians even if there had never been a Hegel, in so far as we (different in this from the Latin nations) instinctively attribute to 'becoming,' to 'developing,' a deeper meaning and a richer value than to that which 'is'—we can hardly believe that the notion 'being' is justified." And elsewhere he says: "A German *is* not, he *becomes*, he 'develops.'" The German language itself seems to play into the hands of Hegelianism, meeting Hegelian thoughts, as it were, half-way. Some of these, from Hegel to Heidegger, could certainly not have been conceived in a less obliging language, particularly not those bearing upon the profoundly bothersome dialectical or existential entanglements between "being" and "becoming." German, in its vocabulary as well as in its syntax, is a restless idiom, better suited to expressing, it seems, the mobile confusions and dynamic exasperations of the mind than its stability and equipoise. It is not for nothing that its greatest poetic triumph is the poetry of *Faust*,

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the drama of the mind's disquiet, and one of its most sublime lyrical moments Goethe's poem of the mystery of "becoming": *Selige Sehnsucht*. This is also why the rare moments of peace and repose into which German poets now and then charm their restless medium, with, for instance, *"Der Mond ist aufgegangen"* or *"Ueber allen Gipfeln ist Ruh,"* overwhelm us with such a shock of poignant delight, and why the prophet of the "gentle law," Stifter, had to invent the most tortuously complex style in order to proclaim the message of the simple life and of the stillness of the world: commotion comes more naturally to the German tongue. Even the anti-Hegelian Schopenhauer once remarked (and earned, of course, Nietzsche's applause for the observation) how much more satisfactory than "reality" the German word *"Wirklichkeit"* is, as a name for the fidgety thing it means, and how much more appropriately it expresses the eternal agility of that which is and yet can hardly ever be said to "be" in its untiring movement from cause to effect (*Wirkung*) with not a moment's rest. And does not *"Gegenwart"* too differ in the same German manner from "present," expressive as it is, verbally and even philologically, of opposition and expectation, of enmity, perhaps, to what happens to be now, and of waiting for what is to *"werden,"* to become?

This national lack of "reality" and "present," lamented or messianically interpreted by so many a German writer and thinker, including Karl Marx, and sanctioned, it seems, by the language itself, can of course be derived from numerous historical causes. But whatever these are, the fact remains that ever since the Reformation and the Thirty Years' War the history of the German people has been felt, inside and outside Germany, to be disquietingly out of step with the rest of Europe. Intellectually, this may be due to the peculiar absence of any clearly articulate transition from the Middle Ages to "modern" Germany. In the second half of the 18th century, Germany, during its "classical" epoch, acquires a highly sophisticated intellectual culture with a suddenness which bodes ill for its broad efficacy and pervasive vitality, and which, in its abrupt efflorescence, may have caused the chronic "indigestion of the German mind" which Nietzsche diagnosed, and before him Friedrich Hebbel when he confided to his diary (19th December, 1843) that "we Germans, unlike the English or French, cannot look upon ourselves as an organic continuation of the past: for that which, after all, we must call our history, is more in the nature of a case-history. . . ."

A country the very language of which suggests a deficient sense of "reality": there could not possibly be a more suitable land for the æsthetic philosopher to be a patriot in, providing as it does a spacious local habitation for his problematical relations with the "real." Infinitely malleable as it must appear in its emphatic state of "becoming," withholding, in its indefinitely sustained "Not yet," the sobering finality of the "Here and Now," the eternal adolescent among the nations, it is the predestined recipient of the Pygmalion love roused by that which is as clay in the hands of the Imagination. Such a people, surely, can be embraced without the slightest risk to one's æsthetic loneliness. It is the ideal object of religious devotion for the religiously undevoted, and the ideal "Other" for the unrealised "self." It is a spiritual fiction which is so powerfully persuasive because it is occasioned by a real presence in the flesh: the multitudes are indisputably there. This distinction it shares with the great romantic fictions of love with which it has something else in common: the illusion of community created by being lonely together. What Nietzsche, in the Preface to *Human, All-too-Human*, says of his past allegiances, also fits the nationalism of *Meditations*:

> "What time and again I needed most for my own cure and recovery, was the belief that I was not quite so isolated . . . a charmed suspicion of kinship and sameness of vision. . . . Maybe I am guilty in this respect of a great deal of 'art,' a great deal of subtle forgery: for instance, about Richard Wagner's incurable romanticism, as if it were a beginning and not an end, or about the Greeks, or about the Germans and their future. . . ."

But why, it may be asked, did Thomas Mann choose the nationalist attachment to

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Germany as his "artful" escape from loneliness? Why not the other "subtle forgery," practised to more timely effect by his many fellow escapists from intellectual isolation—for instance, by the *Zivilisationsliterat*? Why not the flight into the international brotherhood of man to be inaugurated by the revolutionary proletariat? The answer lies in his conservative imagination. "Who am I?" he asks in *Meditations*, "whence do I come that I am as I am, and am neither able nor willing to be anything else?" He is a citizen, he says, a child of the German burgherdom. And how does he see the German burgher? "It is not by accident," he writes, "that, when I search for the image of the burgher, it is a face from medieval Nuremberg that appears before my eyes"—the very image of his idea of German burgher *Kultur*, the face as it was painted in its pessimistic dignity and non-political inwardness by Dürer or Holbein. Thomas Mann's forebears on his father's side came from Nuremberg, and the idea of culture associated with them has a hold upon his imagination against which, for the time being, the new and very different bourgeois reality has no chance of prevailing.

V

THOMAS MANN never ceased to see Germany with the eyes of this conservative love. *Doctor Faustus* is the fruit of its despairing passion. His development from *Meditations* to *Doctor Faustus*, from the patriotism of the First World War to the implacable indignation during the Second, from the indictment of his "westernising" brother to his first angry refusal to visit Germany in 1946, is uncannily reminiscent of Nietzsche's way from *The Birth of Tragedy*, still vibrant with the hope that the spirit would elect Germany for its new incarnation, to his violent onslaughts on the hateful people in *Ecce Homo*, tirades unequalled in their fury by any foreign enemy. And it is ironical indeed—ironical in its absolute consistency—that on the occasion of Thomas Mann's seventieth birthday his brother Heinrich, who once enraged him not so much by his "political opposition to Germany" as by being "un-German in his soul," should be able to say: "He wanted to believe in Germany.... Hence his unforgiving anger. A man, thus disillusioned, must beware of rejecting a whole nation together with its guilty men.... When we talk about it now... then it is rather I who refuse to see the unhappy country of our origin as a unique monster." In that seventieth year of his, Thomas Mann published an essay, *Germany and the Germans*, a by-product of *Doctor Faustus*, which cunningly quotes, without of course giving chapter and verse, whole passages from *Meditations*, the only difference being that the new context reverses the accents of approval and disapproval. But as in *Meditations*, the Germans are still "the people of the romantic counter-revolution against the rationalism of the Enlightenment—of the musical rebellion against literature, the mystical uprising against intellectual clarity."

No doubt, this strange *Volk*, which has haunted the souls of its sons with the uncontrollable persistence of a ghost, has denied itself the "present" not only for the sake of its "becoming" and its messianic future, but also in its archaic faithfulness to the mythological past. What a European anachronism, for instance, is Richard Wagner! Where else in Europe could, at that time, a primitive national mythology have been revived on such a scale (Yeats is a miniaturist in comparison) and, fed on the resources of a most advanced artistic inventiveness, not have produced the effect of sheer travesty? While France and England and even Russia, in their great novels, created the image of mythless modern man, a conductor from Dresden conquered the world with the Nibelungs and a bass-baritone cobbler from Nuremberg. There is an astounding measure of national authenticity in such success, which could not have been achieved without a genuine liveliness of the archaic imagination.

EARLY in *Meditations* there is an autobiographical reflection concerning Wagner which, in its portentous and deliberate confusion, sums up the final problem of this

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

problem-ridden book: the writer divided in himself between his conservative imagination and his exceedingly disruptive, "modern," and even "decadent" literary talent. It is one of his oldest and most fruitful problems—one of those he has with unimpeachable rights inherited from the early German Romantics, in particular from Friedrich Schlegel. Its other name is myth and psychology, and Thomas Mann mentions it for the first time in 1910, in his affectionate essay on the old Fontane: "Myth and psychology," he says there, "are opposites, and where they live together in one and the same mind, where the 'poetic' is joined together with the 'literary,' there will be contradictions; for the poet is conservative in his rôle as guardian of the myth, while psychology corrodes and undermines, and is the most effective tool of democratic enlightment." This will fit Fontane only at a stretch, but it certainly fits Thomas Mann (who in nothing is more like God than in the irresistible urge to create all great men a little in his own image). Myth and psychology—it is this quarrelsome pair which is almost omnipresent in Thomas Mann's works, sometimes with ruinous effect, as in *Fiorenza* and *The Tables of the Law*, sometimes humorously fighting on the edge of disaster, as in *The Holy Sinner*, sometimes splendidly reconciled in long æsthetic peace, as in *Joseph and his Brothers*.

In the passage from *Meditations* we have in mind, Thomas Mann protests that it was his youthful devotion to Wagner's music to which he owes almost everything of whatever artistic mastery he may have acquired; for Wagner affected him, not as the musician or dramatist of myth, but as "the modern artist *par excellence*, as Nietzsche's critique has taught me to see him," just as Nietzsche himself was to him not what he was to the fashionable intellectuals, not the prophet of a vaguely visualised Superman, but "the incomparably greatest and most thoroughly initiated psychologist of decadence." Having made these points, Thomas Mann goes straight on to make another which ill accords with the unmythological modernity of his taste for Wagner. He remembers Italy where, "a youth for whom there was no room at home," he lived "in a kind of voluntary exile"; and in Rome, "the unloved city," Wagner's music was "literally the home of my soul." He would listen to it on the Pincio at a concert, standing "poorly dressed amid a welter of international elegance" at the foot of the platform, "under a thickly blue sky which never ceased to get on his nerves, under palm-trees which he despised," and would, "feeling weak in his knees with enthusiasm, receive the romantic message of the overture to *Lohengrin*. Did he remember those hours when, twenty years later, there was war between the spirit of *Lohengrin* and the elegant international world?" If so, "the modern artist *par excellence*" has inspired rather antique passions.

Wagner was also played on the Piazza Colonna whenever the Wagnerite maestro Vessella conducted the concerts of the municipal orchestra; and each time there were nationalist and conservative demonstrations against the new and foreign music. One day Vessella put the Funeral March from *Götterdämmerung* on the programme:

> "I shall never forget how, amid *evivas* and *abbassos*, the Nothung-motif emerged for the second time, how it unfolded its powerful rhythms above the tumult of opinions, and how at its climax, at that shattering dissonance before the two thunderous C-Major chords, there rose a triumphant yell which drove the shaken opposition back and reduced it to silence for quite a while. The stranger, twenty years old—as strange here as this music—stood wedged there on the pavement. He took no part in the shouting because he was choking. Gazing at the platform which furious *Italianissimi* were trying to storm and the players defended with their instruments, he smiled, pale though he felt his face to be, and his heart beat in tempestuous pride and youthfully morbid emotion.... Pride in what? Love of what? Only of a disputed musical taste?—Likely, more than likely, that twenty years later, in August, 1914, he remembered the Piazza Colonna and the nervous tears which had filled his eyes at the victory of the Nothung-motif, and streamed down his cold face because, packed in a foreign crowd, he was unable to lift his arm."

It is only too obvious that the pride and love of the enraptured young man are not

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

roused merely by the uproarious triumph of an artistic convention. More even is involved than simple patriotism or a romantic message: the Nothung-motif is the thing, the lure of the archaic past, and the enchantment with those mythic regions where the imagination has its roots. Sever it from them, and it is lost, as lost as life itself, its music, its poetry, its truth, and its love. Beware of civilisation and its literary champions! Thus speaks the conservative artist and non-political man, or thus would he like to speak, and might, if he spoke more moderately, speak a truth, just as he has spoken many others in the course of his meditations. Yet *is* he what he speaks? The question haunts every page of the book, and will, being faced and answered, seal the destiny of a great ironical writer, a fate which the works to come will, in many shapes and ever richer constellations, now serenely accept, now tragically contemplate, now comically exploit—but never transcend; and least of all will it be affected by the political man's occasional unfaithfulness to the ironical æsthetic philosophy. The passage continues:

"Yet I do not deceive myself. Even if the young man then experienced Wagner's art as a source of patriotic sentiments, it was in truth an intellectual experience which I shared with Europe.... For this German composer was not a 'German composer' in the old, intimate, genuine sense of the word.... What entranced me had nothing to do with the nationally German, poetically German, or romantically German in his art—or only in so far as all this appears in it in an intellectualised, decorative, and self-conscious manner.... No, I was not German enough to overlook the profound similarity between his effects and those of Zola and Ibsen who are both, like him, above all deliberate manipulators of symbols and of tyrannically schematic inventions; the French novelist in particular, naturalist and romanticist also, is his true brother in the will and the power to intoxicate and overwhelm the masses.... The Rougon-Macquart and the Ring of the Nibelung—the 'Wagnerite' cannot think of them together. Yet they *belong* together: to the critical observer, if not to the loving admirer."

Thus the archaic shudders of the Nothung-motif are instantly outgrown, while the war between the spirit of the *Lohengrin* overture and the literary taste of the elegant international world, between the conservative imagination and the disruptive psychological modernism, between the non-political man and the champion of civilisation, is transferred to its predestined battlefield—the writer's own soul and mind:

"Why all this labour? Why the prolonged and humiliating servitude in which I am kept by this book? No one demands or expects it of me, and neither gratitude nor honour shall I earn with it. It is obvious, is it not, that nobody would concern himself to such an extent with something which *need* not affect him, because he understands nothing of it and has nothing of it in himself, in his own blood.... Could it be that what I am... does not correspond exactly to what I think and believe, and that I am destined to further precisely that which on these pages I have called 'Progress' through the very act of conservatively opposing it—opposing it by means of 'literature'?"

And again: "A writer who, when this war broke out, was on the point of writing a parody of the German *Bildungsroman* in the form of memoirs of a confidence-trickster, has a share in the intellectual disruption of German culture." And again: "What else is this long monologue if not a review of what I was—what for a while I was legitimately and honourably—and what clearly I shall no longer be able to be without feeling old?" And finally: "Literature is analysis, intelligence, scepticism, psychology; it is 'democracy,' it is the 'West.' And where it is joined in one person to conservative convictions, there will be inner conflict. Conservative? Of course, this is not what I *am*; for even if I wished to believe it, my nature would refute me."

The "ethics of being" can hardly be more persistently used as an instrument of self-critique. Yet the problematical existence revealed by the critique is strangely determined not to part with its problems and to remain in the "ironical state"; and most of the works to come will have their central inspiration in the unresolved dilemma.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FROM THE OTHER SHORE

ITEMS: Kenneth Tynan has been taken to task by *Literaturnaya Gazeta* for his review of the new Chaplin film, *A King in New York*: "Mister Tynan, in a sycophantic fervour before America, advises the great master to look back in anger, to return to his former ways, to his former Chaplinesque mask. The laborious efforts of such critics look comically funny."... Almost coinciding with the suppression of *Po Prostu*, an interview with Isaac Deutscher appeared in the Warsaw weekly *Swiat*, containing somewhat delphic utterances on the problem of freedom of the press in Poland: "When limiting—and rightly—the democratic freedoms at certain periods (only a demagogue could to-day demand integral freedom in Poland) the people's state should not present this practice as a virtue, still less as eternal virtue. The problem is not to go too far in one direction or the other."... The new Polish literary monthly, *Europa*, which was due to appear on 1st November, was banned by the censor after the first issue was set in type. Some members of its editorial board (notably Jerzy Andrzejewski, Pawel Hertz, Adam Wazyk) have resigned from the Party.

•

The leading philosophical spokesman for the Polish Communist Party, Professor Adam Schaff, in his report on the International Conference of Philosophers held this past summer in Warsaw, had this to say about the Marxist participants in the conference:

"It is small consolation that our interlocutors were often also weak; this does not mitigate the weakness of our own attempts to defend Marxism. We must get rid in the first place of our lamentable habit of always repeating the Marxist alphabet, its elementary and primary truths. We all have finally to admit that some of our adversaries know Marxism better than most of us do (I strongly suspect that this is the case with M. Raymond Aron), and that if they are not in agreement with us, it is not because they do not know Marxism, but despite the fact that they know it perfectly."

This report, published in the theoretical organ of the Party, *Nowe Drogi*, also stressed the particularly high level of Professor A. J. Ayer's contribution, "no doubt because it was devoted to a scientific problem on which Professor Ayer has been working for a long time."

•

Soviet music recently suffered a major shake-up, following the general drive for tighter control by the Party of Soviet cultural life. The editorial board of *Sovetskaya Musika* has been dropped for "failing to defend Party principles in the field of music." They have also been charged with "having defined the period of 1948–1955 as a single chain of musical failures and mistakes." Individual Soviet composers have been asked to comment on Khrushchev's recently published pronouncements on art, which had been followed by the publication in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* of a spate of toadying articles by the more conformist Soviet writers. The reaction of the composers, judging by what has been published so far, is not very enthusiastic, and in some instances is positively unexpected. Dmitri Shostakovich, for example, used the opportunity to demand more, not less freedom for the artist. In a laconic comment, he drew attention to the case of Maxim Rylski, a Ukrainian writer, who was accused of "bourgeois nationalism" in the Stalin era. This, according to Shostakovich, was outrageous: "The use of offensive remarks against Soviet artists should be discontinued once and for all...."

•

While the "Polish way to socialism" is becoming ever more circuitous, the satirical weekly *Szpilki* has devoted a special number ("For adults only") to "The Polish Way to Love." The two themes are not entirely unconnected as can be seen from one of the contributions, a short story by Krystyna Zywulska, "The Pillar":

(He and she in an unambiguous situation. They kiss each other.)

She: 'Well, darling, enough cuddling, there is a meeting in an hour. Get dressed.'

He: 'Yes, indeed. The meeting...can't be helped.'

She: 'No, can't be helped, my darling. You will have to listen to the voice of the masses.'

He: 'I hope you aren't going to make a speech....'

She: 'And why not? Do you think I am such a cow that I am suited only for a certain purpose? Of course, I'm going to make a speech. At the present moment, a person who does not criticise is not well looked upon. They might even think that I am satisfied with everything.'

He: 'And what are you going to talk about?'

She: 'Well. First of all about dignitaries like you, and, of course, about the dignitary's wife. For instance, right now she is staying in a spa,

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

while I am working hard....I shall speak in the name of the working class....At a time when we are carrying on our shoulders, and with such difficulty, all of heavy industry, when we are hardening the steel produced in our smelting-houses, when we are introducing the conveyor belt technique...your limousine takes you to the cinema to see a French film....'

He: 'Yes, indeed...it does....'

She: 'And meanwhile I get mangled in the tram....'

He: 'You get mangled...my poor girl... gets mangled....'

She: 'Don't touch me now...when we are going through such a—so to say—moral crisis... your wife goes in the limousine to have an Italian cut....'

He: 'To have what?'

She: 'To have an Italian cut at the hairdresser. Or goes to the dressmaker. To buy this yellow hat, for instance. And what sort of a hat is this for her, anyhow? With her complexion, her skin, and her face....'

He: 'With her complexion...her skin...and her face....Of course, what sort of a face is it anyway?...'

She: 'Look at your service flat. I'll have to say in the name of the popular masses how many square yards are occupied by your single person....'

He: 'Yes, you are right...of course....I'll confine myself to less....But please don't say it....'

She: 'I cannot be silent. While the working class with difficulty can afford only one wife... you let yourself have a wife and a mistress....'

He: 'How is it?...I don't understand.... After all, that's you....'

She: 'Well, so what of it, that it's me? It's accidental. Might have been somebody else. Do you think that while speech-making I cannot distinguish between flesh and...conscience?'

He: 'So what am I to do...what to do?'

She: 'What are you to do? You have to get rid of your wife for her aristocratic habits. Such a wife after the Twentieth Congress is a source of all distortions. You're lucky to have near you in your situation such a pillar as myself, so that I can help you to overcome weaknesses....'

He: 'Yes, of course. Only now I see it clearly. Together with the popular masses, in a small room...without a yellow hat...with a pillar ...must I build the house of socialism....'

She: 'What? In a small room, with me? Why? Your wife was a dignitary's wife, but I am a healthy one from below and have been under pressure from above for many years by such people as you....'

He: 'Of course...of course...I've forgotten. After all, you are something quite different....'

She: 'Well, you see....So now give me the car for an hour and I'll drop in at the hairdresser and the dressmaker, the driver can wait, and then we can go to see this French film.... Well, now at last...I hope that these norms of the Party life will be implemented in our country.'

*

The Soviet Russian way to love is treated with far greater solemnity. *Literaturnaya Gazeta* reported indignantly a remark by a hero of a Soviet novel who, "trying to correct the unfavourable impression" his poor room had made on his beloved, ironically comments: "Socialism is ill-adapted to adultery." This, according to the journal, is outrageous: "How can a man be sarcastic about his own sentiments?"

*

Communism and the theatre

At present there are seventeen Western plays on the Polish stage; no Soviet play has been produced for a year. The Party authorities are worried by this, and recently the theatre managers were attacked by *Trybuna Literacka*, the new literary supplement of the official Party organ, *Trybuna Ludu*. But the theatre managers are in a predicament, because of the degree of "consumers' sovereignty" now exercised in the theatrical world. The simple fact is that, so long as there is a possibility of choice, the theatre showing a Soviet play will stay empty. At the same time, despite a cold reception by the critics, the American musical comedy, *Kiss Me Kate* has become a huge box-office hit.

*

In Russia, meanwhile, the board of the Ministry of Culture of the U.S.S.R. which met to discuss the results of the 1956–1957 theatre season, found that not a single play had been produced "unmasking the intrigues of the enemies of peace, the instigators of a new war." The theatre managers were strongly censured for the fact that "despite the just criticism of plays propagating bourgeois morality (e.g., *Dial 'M' for Murder*), theatres continue to be fascinated by them and to retain them in their repertoire."

The Soviet drama continues, however, to display some elements of farce. Two "classical" Soviet pieces, the play *Kremlin Chimes* by Pogodin, and the scenario by Kapler of the film *Lenin in 1918*, have been re-written according to the new Soviet historiography. Stalin is now conspicuous by his absence in both of them. The first piece, published in English translation in *Soviet Literature* (No. 11, November 1957) has underneath the title a note in brackets: "Revised, 1956." The other, made into a play, has a similar subheading: "The new variant."

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

DISCUSSION

Britain's New Class

THIS country is sick, without confidence, neurotic. The smell of the sick-room is strong and the feverish cries that go up from some quarters, the accusations and the exhortations are shouts of delirium—not promises of health. Every now and again a fashionable scapegoat is found. The Establishment and the Welfare State are at the moment sharing the honours. (Lord Beaverbrook, of course, feels that the British Council is the root cause of the rot.) The Establishment is good for a laugh always—like machine-gunning Madame Tussaud's or throwing grenades around the Natural History Museum. The Tories always fall back on the Welfare State. Rain on Sunday, addled eggs, slate in the coal, cheeky schoolboys, the emigration of technologists—they're all the fault of the Welfare State. Personally—although the blood doesn't fizz thick before my eyes with emotion when the Welfare State is mentioned—I can't imagine that finding, say, £500 to pay surgeons to clean up my cancer-ridden frame would give me any kind of a fillip.

So are we really sick of the Establishment and/or the Welfare State? Or are we sick of ourselves—are we sick of Britain, the Britain we're supposed to be, the first-rate power that we're not, the great little island no one ever allows us to forget we once were, with our mouldering Few and our Scrapbooks for 1928, and our Agincourts and our Trafalgars and our gallant retreat from Dunkirk and all the crazy, bewildering, jingo junk we call our heritage, that weighs so heavily upon us that every time an announcer opens his mouth to introduce the latest song-hit from America, you can hear the Tower Raven perched on his shoulder whisper: "There but for 1776 goes a *British* song-hit."

Take away the Welfare State from Britain to-day and what would we have? We'd have some unemployment, an increase in production, a leap in our dollar and gold reserves—but we'd still have that look in our eyes. We'd still be unhappy and hate the man next door and want to win the pools or clean up at the Stock Exchange and raise two fingers at the rest of the working world. Because we're not a community any more—we're fifty million individuals who plan to take care of ourselves—from the business man who drinks himself to death to avoid paying tax on his profits, to the builder's labourer who puts a top-coat of paint straight on to the rust so that he can sell the undercoat on the side.

Superficially, then, everyone is sniping at everyone else, faction denounces faction, sect abuses sect, and faceless straw-stuffed monsters joust clumsily to the jeers of the mob. There seems no hope because none of it makes sense. But there is a pattern. In the social fog there are figures taking shape.

IN theory we are divided into Upper Class, Middle Class, and Working Class, but since everyone knows that such simple divisions are meaningless, the whole business has been super-analysed into dozens of intermediate gradings like lower-middle-class and upper-middle-class in a vain attempt to mitigate the absurdities of the rule of three. These terms may be the basic English at sociologists' bottle parties, but in fact the class set-up to-day so defies neat pigeon-holing that where possible it pays to scrap the old terms altogether. In any case, Evelyn Waugh's definition of Upper Class wouldn't have the slightest resemblance to, say, Aneurin Bevan's or John Osborne's.

In imperfect human societies—that is, all human societies—there are some very simple divisions that hold good regardless of the cultural or economic state of that society. There are always Top Dogs and there are always Under Dogs. Strung out between the two poles is the rest of the population, going up, coming down, or coasting in neutral. No one likes to say this—and not because it's an anti-democratic idea either. The Top Dogs don't dream of saying it because it is vital for them that the rest of society should feel the inevitability of the Ruling Class's right to rule. Once people start thinking in terms of top dog and under dog they also start thinking about turning tables. Tables often are turned anyway—but the Top Dog who wants to cut a respectable figure in history is always dragged down maintaining that his particular species of Topdoggery is eternal, sacrosanct, and divinely inspired. The under dogs for their part hate the appellation too, because whether or not they believe it to be true, they have the uneasy sensation that being an under dog is (a) your own fault, (b) humiliating, and (c) a stain you never get rid of. This may account for the emphasis all working-class movements put upon the dignity of man, and the dreary way in which so many *nouveaux riches* pretend that they're really frightfully *anciens riches*.

Now, as the dividing lines between class become more blurred and there is less and less to be gained by identification with a social group, large numbers of people begin to realise that they have become

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(1) classless, and (2) declassed. At the moment, in England, the most interesting section of the population, those who are actually living in the 20th century, those who keep the corpse twitching, come up with the new ideas, can tell the real from the bogus, the funny from the facetious, the serious from the pompous, are scattered all the way up and down the economic and cultural scale. They are unsentimental, they reject the nostalgic, they are never parochial, have no fixed opinions on homosexuals, are prepared to laugh at archbishops, prime ministers, trade union leaders, demagogues, revivalists, vice-rings, vice-squads—in fact, if you want a simple means of identifying them, they are all those people who don't give a damn what school *you* went to and have long since forgotten which one *they* went to. These are the *un*-classed, the classless. They *like* being un-classed.

These genuinely classless people must not, however, be confused with the large group of the declassed who because of their brains and energy—or, on the other hand, their sloth and stupidity—have moved out of the class they were born into and landed in a social limbo where everyone else is an enemy—but where your worst enemy is yourself. Of these two varieties the fallen top dog is without interest. He either gives up the ghost altogether or lives quietly in the suburbs on a small annuity. But the others, the elevated under dogs, stay with us—and it is not long before they get so numerous that they have to be reckoned with as social dynamite. Their blasting operations are normally irrational, spiteful, and quite destructive. Occasionally, there is a pukka outsider—a spiritual outsider—wandering around amongst these lost legions. Always there are countless charlatans who *say* they're outsiders. But the body of this group—if we are not going to be misled by the vitality and originality of some of its number—consists of born insiders who never made the grade.

Our underdogs are on the move to-day. Remember—they are ambitious, intelligent, and they come from nowhere. They have no inhibitions. They have nothing to lose that they have not already automatically lost by the simple fact of their intelligence and their education. They have a suddenly acquired taste for life. In some ways everything and anything is possible. But they don't know where to start. They have no background that could have nursed their talents and trained them how to use them. They have only their intelligence, their energy, and too much choice. So they have no confidence and approach everything with suspicion. They loathe the scullery, the kitchen, and the front room they've left behind them and most of them—whatever they may care to say to the contrary—look upon their mums and dads as semi-prehistoric creatures, evolutionary missing links between the gin-and-work-sodden 19th-century working-class ape-man and the modern Grammar School-Redbrick University-Sergeants'/Officers' Mess working-class "cream."

These underdogs then are out of the working class—or what used to be the working class. Most of them got an assisted take-off in life because the homes they were born into were usually those where the parents were determined to give their children a better chance—that is, the clean, hard-working home, which already was no longer quite working class but was merging into that ghastly twilight world where you start by aiming your son at an office job and end, yourself, by settling into a pseudo-genteel (subtle double fake, this) imitation of the most factitious elements in middle-class life. The word for that, of course, is petty-bourgeois—and it's still a nasty thing to say about anybody even though the actual class is a thing of the past. For what happened in Europe between 1914 and 1945 has made these terms historically interesting—like "enclosures" or "fiefs." The parents, of course, still linger on, but they have dropped away like spent rockets, consoling themselves with television, football-pools, and bronchitis from October to March, while underdog son splutters out of sight into unknown orbits.

At this point I should like to consider the emergence of the British working class from the sweat-shops of the last century and its disintegration as a class in the process. It is one of the tragedies for conservatism that if it tries to fix society eternally at any stage in its development, there will either be eventual revolution or the country will become so backward that it will fall prey to one of a dozen of its progressive-minded neighbours. If conservatives want to keep anything at all they must be dedicated to a policy of retreat. And one of the withdrawals that the Tories in this country were most loth to make was that of secondary education for all—especially education as a matter of principle, not just vocational training to enable the worker to become more efficient at his job. The trouble with unrestricted education, however archaic its methods, is that it can't help teaching some people to think and in a couple of generations the country is swarming with hundreds of thousands of upstart crows who in happier times would be dulling the pain of life in gin-shops instead of borrowing highbrow books from the local public library. Now a totalitarian state controls its supply of educated men to suit its requirements, and as these men emerge from the schools and universities they are slotted into the posts assigned to them in a rigid social hierarchy. In a democracy, however, it doesn't work like that. First you say, "Education for all." Then you sit back and see what happens. And if the international situation gets out-of-hand in the meantime—if you lose your Empire—if you exhaust your resources and your endurance in a world war—if you find in 1945 that you are fifty million strong living on a small island off the coast of a shattered Europe—then it is not at all nice to discover that your education acts have produced an army of rag-tag and bobtail new men who are fed up with you, fed up with war, fed up with politics, fed up with rationing, and feel it is time that the good things in life came their way.

Because there are two significant factors in the rise of this new class that makes it quite unlike any social revolution in the past. In the first place, we are concerned here—if not with a majority group—at least with the numerous representatives

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of a majority group. And they are emerging—not into a world of vast opportunity and expanding horizons—but into a rapidly *constricting* society. If we look at the emergence of any new class or social group in the past we see that it has always been engineered *by* a minority group *for* a minority group whatever the slogans happen to be. This is fundamental to its successful take-over of power and its exploitation of the wealth available. Among other things, you rise to power (a) because you have more energy than any other group; (b) because you want power; (c) because the Zeitgeist has been waiting for you; and (d) because you want to get *your* hands on the loot. All four reasons would, I think, be acceptable to Marx. The last reason, I regret to say, is usually very important. The barons got their land and the bourgeois got their factories. By the time we get to the 20th century in Europe—and particularly in England—there isn't much left except a little house, a little car, a little wife, a little drink, and a little look at a big screen. For a conqueror—for a new man—this is peanuts.

Now I don't want to be unfair. I don't want to make it seem that behind all the cosmic rage and the social sneers is a dreary beggar who wants a Jaguar and an expense account, though he does tend to suggest that himself. But I do want to examine his qualifications for being the new top dog and see if circumstances will let him pull it off.

First, there is no doubt about his energy. He's virile enough, like it or not. There may also seem to be a strain of hysterical decadence in him too, but if he started to move in the right direction that should slough off like stale make-up. For it's the times that make him jaded. You try smacking your head up against a wall right through adolescence into your late 20's and see if you don't feel jaded—especially when you have the nasty feeling that there's damn-all the other side of the wall anyway. And the energy makes it worse, because our new man has the strength to stay conscious while the head-smacking is in progress. He refuses to pass out. He *wants* to suffer.

Second, he has an urge to power—though this urge makes its appearance in different forms. I've no doubt there are some of these under dogs who see themselves as heads of state, or even as captains of industry, and there are certainly some who see themselves in even grander, messianic rôles. But the power urge with our typical under dog is less precise. He wants recognition. He's tired of being a nobody—a tool. And no rising class is purely destructive. It wants to control—both intellectually and spiritually. It wants to offer new standards of behaviour, new personal relations, a new way of life. And this new class is no different. It's got its gods packed away in old suitcases, rucksacks, creaking chests of drawers—and it can't keep them there forever. But to proclaim them it has to have room to breathe. It must be able to spread itself. And there isn't much room any more.

Thirdly, there's the Zeitgeist. He's been waiting for our new men all right. But he's been waiting with a sour grin on his face and his thumbs turned down. So stagnation sets in and the distant murmur of those heads against that wall becomes a drumming in the ears, a thundering in the cellars, and a blasting in the streets. And the stink rises, and with it comes the obscenity and the hate, and before you know where your nice, new élite has got to, the dung has started to fly and the Establishment—a vague creature half-sheep, half-goat at the best of times with just a touch of hippopotamus and the faintest soupçon of ostrich—is dabbing angrily with an impeccable handkerchief at the filthy gobbets on its smooth pink cheek.

So all that's left is the loot. And there isn't much loot as we've already said. But in spite of this being the century of common man and the age of opportunity, etc., you have to be blind not to notice that what loot there is is still very unevenly distributed. So in between bouts of despair, beans on toast, and dung-throwing, our hero casts his eyes about, and gazes through their hot rims at the big cars, the big hotels, the big deals, the big properties. And as night comes down on his provincial town (he only lives in provincial towns, oddly enough) and the smog seeps under the door, and the mice begin to shuffle towards his waste-bin, and another fly-button falls off his favourite pair of Burton's trousers, he begins to dream of the full-life, the cocaine land, where all is *luxe, calme,* and *volupté.*

From what I have said so far it should be clear that class struggle, in this country at any rate, if not dead, is an anachronism that can only confuse issues, prolong unnecessarily the spell of doldrums we're in, and eventually lead to throat-slitting on a large scale. Yet class-warfare—together with many other manic versus depressive struggles, such as male-female, youth-age, highbrow-lowbrow—is not only still going on in this country but is being *artificially* maintained in many quarters. And not for purely ideological reasons either. Communists, obviously, must attempt to keep the dividing lines clear, exacerbate all social divisions. They are in fact having very little success, because militant political feeling happens to be unfashionable in this country at the moment—and understandably. It is becoming increasingly difficult to say at what point a man stops being an under dog and becomes a top dog. Of course, for someone with nothing to differentiate him from the herd except a four-bedroomed house, a job in the Foreign Office, or a distant connection with some bankrupt branch of an aristocratic family, class is a narcotic that enables him to ignore the vast dimensions of his own fundamental mediocrity. This, however, should not be necessary for the intelligent under dog—our new man. But strangely enough it is in fact he who is largely responsible for the recent outburst of class hatred in intellectual circles. Whatever his reasons, he is doing himself a disservice—quite apart from the harm he will do his society, which sententious piece of puritanism I should not dream of hissing, even as an "aside," if our new man himself did not imply that his own outcry was intended in large part as a castigation and subsequent purge of the social body.

The élite of our under dogs are riding to fame on a class basis—exploiting our discontents, our sense of hopelessness, creating all the necessary con-

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ditions for the rise of any megalomaniac opportunists lurking at this moment God-knows-where, on a teaching staff, in an insurance office, or behind the counter of a chemist's branch shop. In a flourishing, expanding society that desperately needs new blood from the bottom of the social ladder, there is little difficulty in absorbing these under dogs, giving them prestige, money, and a stake in stability. This has happened with many of the young technicians and scientists who, absorbed in their special skills—and more parochial than village idiots—have largely abdicated from all interest in man as such. But there are multitudes of our under dogs who do not fall into either of these categories, and in this country to-day these new men cannot be funnelled off. And at this point an interesting paradox occurs which is worth, I hope, both examination and digression.

The most irresponsible British newspapers have seized upon the spokesmen of our under dogs and given them and their attitudes great publicity—just as these same newspapers seize upon any "controversial" subject in their effort to maintain the permanent note of hysterical novelty that their supersensationalist policies force upon them. Controversial, in this context, means any topic that is likely to hurl the various class, sex, and age stereotypes at each others' throats in sterile, inter-faction massacre. The paradox here is that such mass-circulation newspapers—and the *Daily Express*, of course, is the one that springs instantly to mind—should be prepared to publish expressions of opinion contrary to their own tawdry set of Christmas-cracker beliefs. But they are, in fact, prepared to publish anything and anybody provided this opposition will: (a) sell their newspapers; (b) debase both the writer and the public by the superficial treatment that any subject must inevitably get in the tabloid press; and (c) prevent the subsequent serious consideration of even important issues by devaluing them in advance. What might therefore be a valuable and constructive critique of our stagnant society, with far-reaching, stimulating effects upon our demoralised, snivelling under dogs ends in frothy publicity and the production of a few more strident personalities—a result which ultimately must discredit both those involved and the protest they are making.

I do not want to be understood as being in favour of the status quo. I am quite aware, too, that class consciousness exists in other quarters besides those I've been talking about. (For instance, it is not easy for a Grammar School boy with a local accent to break into top administrative circles—even if he wanted to—and I certainly don't suggest he should take elocution lessons and get himself an "old boy" voice in order to slide in the back door, either.) But I should say this to the discontented:

Accept responsibility for yourself and your presence on this earth. If you find life here intolerable, do away with yourself. If you find suicide an extreme solution to your difficulties, get on with the difficult business of living as best you can. Stay in your own backyard and improve the adjacent territory by raising your own standards of behaviour in your dealings with the rest of the human race. Don't yearn after the limelight because the suffocated corpses of last week's heroes are already eighteen deep in the orchestra pit. Avoid reading third-rate books or seeing third-rate films or plays, because if you do you are giving the people responsible for them the opportunity of financing more third-rate films, books, etc. Unless you actually happen to have faith—it's as rare as smallpox these days—don't touch religion with a barge pole. Turn the don't-call-again look on mystics, men with a power, men who have the answer, and men of destiny. And—a hard one this—try and forget about the cost-of-living now and again, the way Lord Hailsham does. You'll be pretty busy with all this, of course—it's tiring work being responsible for your own actions and thoughts—but it gives you that nice relaxed feeling the *Reader's Digest* is always talking about, and if you keep at it long enough it may even make its mark on this sick, silly world. If, however, this abominably moral tone is not to your liking, buy yourself a cudgel and a dark shirt and spend the next year or two calculating which minority group is going to be isolated as scapegoat when the Welfare State and the Establishment—too amorphous by far—have stopped being Aunt Sallies. Once you have spotted the winner (or, rather, the loser in this case) ensure that there is no outside chance of your being considered a member of that unfortunate group by either, (a) publicly denouncing it as the root of all evil, or (b) throwing bad eggs at one of its prominent representatives in some crowded spot like Ascot, the Harringay Arena, or the promenade at Brighton.

In conclusion, I want to look more closely at a few examples of the declassed intelligent under dog I have been concerned with in this polemic. For that purpose I don't want to construct hypothetical figures or accuse public figures of being what they may or may not be, since public figures are rarely what they seem and never, while they can still speak and write, what you accuse them of being. Instead, I shall choose fictional characters who appear in the works of Messrs. Amis, Osborne, and Braine, assuming that these characters are neither men in the moon nor pure figments of the imagination, but types—types that might exist now, and presumably do exist now, however distortedly they may be represented by the heightening they have undergone in the imagination of their creators. I am led to think that the way these three characters captured the public attention is also another point in favour of my argument. Public attention is almost always caught by characters with whom the public can identify themselves or, perhaps more significant, with whom they would *like* to identify themselves. In the first case the character is right with us now. In the second he is just around the corner.

This does not pretend to be literary criticism. I am not discussing the book or play *as such*. Nor am I concerned with the author's attitudes. I am simply trying to do a little sociology on the cheap. Neither am I suggesting that all these characters are identical. In fact, in life, they would probably

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

find each others' company intolerable. Nevertheless, there are aspects of each of them repeated in one of the others and occasionally in all three, who fundamentally are the new men we're talking about.

Now there has been some confusion about Jim number one—largely because Mr. Amis has a strong sense of humour and likes a bit of slapstick. And this sense of humour has tended to obscure some of the nastier sides of Lucky Jim's character. Jimmy-watch-his-step has, we learn, established himself precariously in the "sham" scholastic world of the bourgeois intelligentsia—and is about as happy in this environment as a street-urchin in an Eton collar. He never feels at home there for, although declassed, archetypes of his old class subconscious keep returning and his basic urge to put his feet on the mantelpiece is too strong to make the drawing-room acceptable. He is in fact a highly unstable compound, prone to go to pieces in an emergency and throw away all the social and cultural trappings that have against his natural instincts been foisted on him. He is even more prone to do this if he lays eyes on a brightly-lit Exit sign. Meanwhile his frustration gives him overpowering urges to shock the bourgeois—usually by means of simple obscenities. Seen through an uncharitable eye he is an impostor prone to little spiteful acts—like burning someone's insurance forms—though less eager to burn his own boats, except when confident of ultimate delivery from his enemies by a *deus ex machina* called, preposterously enough, Urquart-Gore. This man is a Father figure —the sort of intelligent man-of-action that all intellectuals have a weakness for. Some minor characteristics of Lucky Jim are a fondness for British Boiled Potatoes, British Bitter Beer, and British full-breasted clean young women—all of which are possibly prejudices of Mr. Amis who elsewhere has shown that he has sentimental illusions about commercial travellers (Wordsworth made the same mistake with peasants).

Jimmy-rot-your-guts—the James Porter of Mr. Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*—is much nastier and more violent. Whereas Lucky Jim was capable of pity in his dealing with women, and even protests at this weakness in himself, Jimmy Porter is remorseless in his personal relations. Everyone must suffer for his unhappiness, which—in spite of many of the superficial symptoms—suggests that he is really a Cosmic Case. His principal talent is for denouncing the phoney so, of course, in Britain to-day he becomes a monster of denunciation. In addition he loathes all authority on principle and one feels that if there were no Establishment Jimmy would find it necessary to invent one. To our Jim the whole of British history has been dedicated to the task of arranging that he should be placed in an impossible society, in an intolerable situation, after he has been cynically furnished by the Fates with a jangling bunch of keys that don't happen to fit any of the locks. His education has put him into the intolerable situation, his intelligence enables him to diagnose the full extent of its awfulness, and his energy gives him the violence to take up arms against it. His is the real tragic figure of the declassed. He is a *desperado* in the proper sense of the word—and so bored that he might do anything to break the monotony. His world-picture, which permits him to sustain his attack on windmills, mystifies me. But as with the Establishment if you haven't got a real world-picture it is necessary to invent one. It consists mainly of a social scene that existed perhaps thirty years ago, political ideals that were in flood twenty years ago, and sexual relationships that were common during the Crusades.

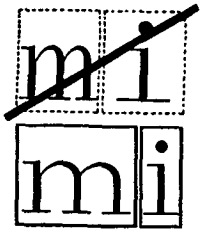
So much for the Jims. Joe, who is the under dog hero of Mr. Braine's novel, *Room at the Top*, is in some ways the nastiest of the lot—although in middle-age he looks back on his nastiness and has regrets. But that, of course, cancels out neither the young Joe nor his actions. In fact it tends to emphasise them—because they're the real thing, and subsequent recantation doesn't convince anybody. His background is a northern industrial town—tragically small enough to be a world in itself, but the sort of world where everyone above the social status of a rag-and-bone man is acutely conscious of the figure he is cutting, or alternatively failing to cut. In a big city—a metropolis, to stick my neck out—this social competition is not so noticeable, because there *is* no neighbourhood in the provincial sense. There are just social strata criss-crossing interminably, but rarely making the human contact that sparks off the hate and humiliation. But in a provincial town you are never able to forget your poverty (that is, absence of wealth) and your inferiority, and if you are especially sensitive to such things, at last you are forced to do something about it. Joe is that sensitive. And he does do something about it. He sets out to take by force and guile the bastions of brass and respectability that dominate the hill. In the process he maims a few people and succeeds—though rather unconvincingly—in getting to the top. His violence and ruthlessness set him apart from the Jims since he makes things happen while they allow circumstances to impose situations upon them.

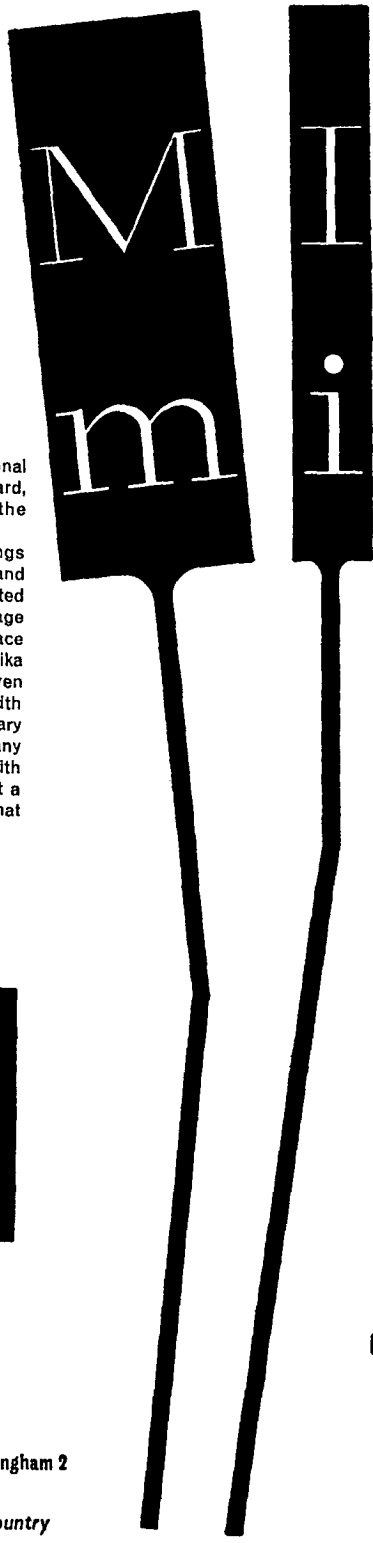
Apart from its horrifying spectacle of provincial life, the most striking thing to me about the book is Joe's anachronistic behaviour. He acts like elemental man in a historical situation that just cannot find room for him. One hundred years ago, Rastignac stood on a hill overlooking Paris and declared that the future lay with the two of them. And apparently, in mid-20th-century England, thousands of Joes in a hundred English provincial towns stand on the narrow pavements before the terraced houses of their working-class parents and stare enviously at the houses on the hill, promising themselves that they will be there before long.

And if we, the countless Jacks, cannot see that the first makes sense and the second does not, then the sooner we club a wages clerk to death and live graciously on the contents of his gladstone bag the better—because there is not now, and there never will be again in this country, that much Room at that kind of Top.

Frank Hilton

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



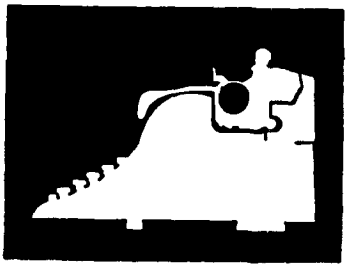


Within the means of every office

For the very first time proportional spacing is introduced in a standard, manually-operated typewriter – the Olivetti Graphika.
Graphika proportional spacing brings to every-day typing the precision and beauty of a page from a well-printed book. In ordinary typewriters the carriage moves by one constant unit of space for each stroke, but in the Graphika each character on the keyboard is given only the amount of space its own width calls for. The result is an extraordinary improvement in the appearance of any and every typed page – achieved with great simplicity of operation and at a cost surprisingly little higher than that of an ordinary standard typewriter.

Graphika

OLIVETTI GRAPHIKA: Price £89.10.0



olivetti

Made in Great Britain by

British Olivetti Ltd

10 Berkeley Square, London W1

Sales Branches:

London – 32/34 Worship Street, EC2
Birmingham – 14 Waterloo Street, Birmingham 2
Glasgow – 115/207 Summerlee Street, E3

Authorised dealers throughout the country

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LETTERS

Queries and Humanities

From Sir John Cockcroft:

I THINK that Stephen Spender [in his "Notes from a Diary," January] is to some extent tilting at windmills. For no intelligent person, least of all the scientists, wishes to see the arts decay. There seems to be a common belief that scientists as a class are illiterate, uninterested in music, art, or writing. In my experience the opposite is true.

But I do not think that the 35,000 or so students of the arts in our Universities need greatly to increase to maintain our tradition in the humanities. We do, however, need, for the inevitable development of our contemporary civilisation, more than the 29,000 or so students now devoting themselves to science and technology and a good deal of the increase of the University population in the next ten years is likely to occur in these subjects. The advent of the Sputnik has not changed this situation.

More and more then will it be necessary to see that the increasing specialisation in the sixth form is reduced, so that our embryo scientists can acquire an appreciation of the arts, and our embryo writers can acquire some understanding of the methods and great achievements of science and its impact on our civilisation.

J. D. COCKCROFT

Harwell
Didcot, Berks.

Fei Hsiao-tung

I HAVE no news to offer your readers about Fei Hsiao-tung, but I am very ready to state my position, as I am challenged to do by an item in "From the Other Shore" in your number for December, 1957. I think that all these public slanders against an expert by his colleagues are very disgusting. Professor Karl Wittfogel, in the article in your January 1955 number which your recent article recalls, said that Fei had been prevented by the Chinese Government from continuing his researches on village life, and made to work on town life instead, and must be feeling ashamed of his acceptance of the Government because it was ill-treating the villagers. Such is what I remember; your recent article says Wittfogel "suggested that Fei was now supporting—or pretending to support—policies that were alien to his way of thinking." I and various other people pointed out that (so far as being confined to towns) he had been made head of the University for National Minorities, and was known to be enthusiastic about such work; most "minorities" being rather remote and hitherto neglected tribespeople. I hope I also said that it is usually considered mean to print insinuations about the secret remorse of public officials, as in "What a swine my tax-collector must feel" or "How the Queen must scream out in the night." What we gather from the recent slanders on Fei in China is that the Wittfogel smear was doubly false; he *was* continuing his work on peasant life, beside his "minority" work, and he *was* passing on his conclusions sincerely, like a responsible Government official anywhere else. We do not gather that he has lost his official position because of the recent slanders against him, or is even likely to. Why you think all this justifies Wittfogel I do not understand. You boys seem to think it is quite all right to tell a lie as long as somebody else tells a different lie later on.

It is a melancholy thing that "the intelligentsia are weasel-minded," a remark made by Ezra Pound while pretending to translate Confucius; indeed, I expect Mao Tse-tung is feeling rather shocked by it, so far from having only intended his bit of encouragement for independent thinkers to work out as a trap for them. Perhaps I should make clear that the slanders come from colleagues, not from any kind of independent M.I.5 system. Surely it is clear that the same kind of nastiness against Fei was going on in both these cases, though Wittfogel was writing from behind the American curtain; how readily we can all imagine Stephen Spender busying himself with such work, if the British Government would only give him proper encouragement. I would like to think that the modern Chinese intellectuals, with their civil-servant tradition to fall back upon, are going to learn a bit more sense in reasonable time; but no doubt we are all much the same everywhere.

WILLIAM EMPSON

Sheffield University

[We do not pretend to understand this letter in its entirety. One of the things Professor Empson *seems* to be saying is that the slanderous accusations against Fei by his colleagues, as published in the official Chinese press, broadcast over Peking radio, and distributed to the world at large by the New China News Agency, are nothing more than an intra-departmental quarrel within the academy. If Professor Empson really believes that, he can believe anything. Perhaps he even believes that Fei's abject, self-abasing "confession" and recantation are in the finest traditions of the Chinese civil service.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

We do not see why it was "mean" for Professor Wittfogel to speculate about what Fei was thinking, and perfectly in order for Professor Empson to speculate about what Mao is thinking. What else can one do under the circumstances, with regard to a country where speech is not only unfree but a repetition of the official line? Moreover, it is now clear that Professor Wittfogel's speculations, so far from being "a lie," were entirely correct: we have Fei's own words to that effect. Professor Empson cannot summon up the candour to admit this. One would gather from his letter that it is Professor Wittfogel, and not the Chinese government, who is persecuting Fei!

A minor point: Professor Wittfogel in his original review said that Fei, whose work had hitherto been in the Chinese villages, had been shunted off to the study of minority tribal areas. Professor Empson has indignantly—and incessantly—retorted that these tribes also live in villages. The reader can judge for himself the cogency of this "refutation."—*Ed.*]

The American Queen

So MANY of my countrymen back in the United States are themselves completely ignorant of the unflattering reason for choosing Queen Marlene as sovran of the continent, that it is not surprising when even the elaborate grapevine of your correspondent, Mr. Randolph Churchill III, fails to drag up the merest whisper of it.

Diet-rich (=Theodo-rix) quite literally means "people's king." It is a contracted form of Wolf-diet-rich (=Vulfa-theodo-rix) "wolf-people's-king" or "wolf-pack-leader" (cf. Slavonic Vluku-vlk, Wolf of Wolves). The legendary Wolfdietrich was supposed to have grown up among wolves and to have had a cross-shaped mark on his shoulder. This cross is not the Old Christian symbol, but is derived from the cuneiform sign ▷▷⊻ meaning "heaven."

The material prosperity of my countrymen over the past hundred and fifty years has combined with their natural optimism to eliminate all but the purely formal dreads of organised religion. Our benign administration will nowhere include in its hand-outs any hint of this scholarship-proven explanation; the people, it reasons, just would not brook its grim archetypal significance. It is only through the efforts of our small Republican Group (and, let us hope, the courtesy of your columns) that scholarship embodying truths of this kind may long survive.

M. J. Ross-MACDONALD
Emigré Secretary
All-American Anti-Monarchist League
Slade School of Fine Art, London, W.C.1

"A Window Onto the Future"

UNTIL its last page my friend Konstanty Jelenski's article "A Window onto the Future," in the December issue of your journal, on the defunct Polish periodical *Po Prostu* is a model of sympathetic analysis. On the last page, however, there occurs a notable change in both style and subject matter which takes the form of a venomous diatribe unrelated to anything else in the article.

Mr. Jelenski states that: "... a chauvinistic and neo-clerical atmosphere was not slow to make itself felt, and against this *Po Prostu* quickly showed a lively reaction."

Although possessing a working knowledge of the Polish press during the last year I can find no written evidence of this "chauvinistic and neo-clerical atmosphere." Certainly not in the conventional left of centre Catholicism represented by *Tygodnik Powszechny*, and as there has been no right wing press in existence in Poland over the last twelve years, it is difficult to imagine where such phenomenon could be observed.

On the other hand I did notice "a lively reaction" by *Po Prostu*, and was much distressed by it, since it consisted of pornographic and blasphemous caricatures inserted in the issues of the paper which carried a serious discussion between Catholics and Marxists.

M. Eligjusz Lasota expressed to me his regrets for what he admitted to be an abominably tasteless action.

In the next sentence Mr. Jelenski makes the surprising statement: "... Polish reactionaries slipped quite easily into the habits of stupidity and vulgarity, prudishness and chauvinism, that were developed by Stalinism."

Who are these "Polish reactionaries?" Does Mr. Jelenski mean Cardinal Wyszynski? Does he mean the *Tygodnik Powszechny*? Does he mean the University of Lublin? Or has he in mind the ninety per cent of Poland's population who belong neither to the Communist Party nor to its disinherited offspring, the editorial board of *Po Prostu*?

The next two sentences imply that the Church has borrowed certain ideas regarding sexual morality from Stalinism. Those even slightly acquainted with Catholic doctrine, however, must surely be aware that the Church has opposed the killing of unborn babies for nearly two thousand years.

If Mr. Jelenski can substantiate his broadside accusation of Catholic anti-semitism by any single quotation from a sermon or the files of the authentic Catholic press, by all means let him do so. Otherwise he might do well to withdraw a grievous slander against a community which lacks the means to defend itself.

Mr. Jelenski does not specify the content of the "excellent story by Marek Hlasko" published in *Po Prostu*. If, however, "Polish fathers and mothers" voiced a protest against "outward manifestations of eroticism and sexual realism" (i.e., pornography) is their attitude to be considered altogether surprising or discreditable?

Everyone who supports the cause of freedom in Poland must concede to *Po Prostu* the position of honour which it has so amply earned. I feel, however, that Mr. Jelenski is doing little to champion *Po Prostu*'s cause by imputing to the periodical a spirit of narrow and sectarian anti-clericalism

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

which, I feel sure, the newspaper's editorial board would be the first to repudiate.

AUBERON HERBERT

London, S.W.7

[*Mr. Jelenski replies:*

In saying that a chauvinistic and neo-clerical atmosphere was not slow to make itself felt in Poland, I did not particularly refer to the Catholic press, but to the peculiar forms of Polish petty-bourgeois Catholicism. Surely if Auberon Herbert has a working knowledge of the Polish press during the last year, he will remember the series of reportages on the "shrine" of Czestochowa, which appeared in *Nowa Kultura* under the title "The Red and the Black." The sermon, for instance, which incited Poles—in 1957—to do away with "Communist Jewry?" True enough, "there has been no right-wing press in existence in Poland over the last twelve years." But Mr. Herbert, who has been in Poland as the guest of "Pax," will know how difficult it is to disentangle the right-wing, anti-Semitic, totalitarian pattern from recent rationalisations by the same people who are now Soviet agents. The main problem, however, is the persecution of children of Jewish or agnostic parents who refuse to attend the religious classes instituted in all Polish schools on the basis of the understanding between the Government and the Church. *Po Prostu* carried a well-documented "dossier" on this. Its issue of 24th March, 1957, for instance, analysed 856 letters, mainly anonymous, sent to the Polish Radio on this problem. Let me quote one, which gives the tone: "Those who don't want to learn religion in schools, send them to school to the Cossack steppes. They are merely animals.... Poland was, is, and will be Christian and Roman Catholic.... I have the support of the whole Polish nation on this point...."

Mr. Herbert says he was "much distressed" by "pornographic and blasphemous caricatures" which he "noticed" in the issue of *Po Prostu* containing a stenographic report of a round table discussion on co-operation between Marxists and Catholics between editors of *Tygodnik Powszechny* and *Po Prostu*. I do not see for myself any "pornographic" or "blasphemous" element in the photograph of Suor Pasqualina, the Pope's German housekeeper. True enough, *Po Prostu* published it with an irreverent heading, "the Popess," which probably provoked the indignant reaction on the part of *Tygodnik Powszechny*. But the caption under the picture gave the following quotation from *Marie-Claire*: "Some intolerant commentators call her 'the Popess,' but this is mere jealousy." If one considers that *Marie-Claire* is the French women's weekly which is recommended by the clergy, as a counterpart to another magazine called *Elle* (which is considered too "lay" or too "Americanised"), one can measure the degree of susceptibility of Catholics in this "socialist" country which is Poland. The more so, if Lasota expressed his "regrets" to Mr. Herbert for this "incident."

I never indicated that the Church's doctrine on birth-control or abortion is anything new. I had in mind the fact that the only voices of protest raised in the Polish parliament against a proposed abrogation of Stalinist legislation in this field came from Catholic deputies.

Discussion on "pornography" and literature would carry us too far. All I implied is that such letters of protest were unknown in pre-war Poland, in which—such a connoisseur of Polish literature as Mr. Herbert will surely agree with me—eroticism and sexual realism were not uncommon. The prudish and hypocritical standards of Zhdanovism have borne their fruit—even if the rationalisation is now different.

Finally, one may have agreed, or not, with the tendency of *Po Prostu*. But I feel one must recognise that this tendency was revolutionary, with all that implies in the effort toward abolishing taboos of every kind. I think that one of the new features of the revolutionary spirit heralded by *Po Prostu* is its rejection of any spiritual or intellectual coercion or persecution. It is an interesting symptom of what I called "the contemporary post-Stalinist pragmatic society," that the Polish government banned a revolutionary newspaper, while manifesting a friendly neutrality towards the Catholic press.]

The Hidden Persuaders

THOUGH hardly in a position to write in favour of "The Hidden Persuaders," I feel compelled to disagree with the opinions expressed by Mr. Kristol in his review of it in the December issue. Dismissing the statement that "Americans have become the most manipulated people outside the Iron Curtain," he replaces one glib metaphor by another, saying that the Russians and Chinese are not so much "manipulated" as "sat upon so sturdily." This verbal hair-splitting is very plausible on the surface, but as far as this aspect of society is concerned, the distinction is merely one of degree, and there is no fundamental difference. Bearing this in mind there is little doubt that we are being manipulated, but whether America is the more guilty party or not, I am not qualified to say.

According to my interpretation of "manipulation," this conceptually facile word, Western society is not exactly in the clutches of the mass-psychoanalysts, but this is a trend worth worrying about. To elucidate what is meant, I will try to express explicitly in terms of real people and events what is implied in Mr. Kristol's review, namely that "manipulation" is no manipulation, as it is with the consent of the victims. They positively enjoy it! If I am to accept this, the term "manipulate" must be dismissed as inapplicable, or it must be given a special definition in this context—and the discussion will bog down in a verbal quagmire. The point at issue is Mr. Packard's dislike of mental states being induced by authoritarian forces. "Why!" says Mr. Kristol. "People do not rise up in protest against this flagrant violation of their personalities." Indeed they do not, but if individuals never bothered to worry because nobody else does, then society would become static and decay. However, people do in fact grumble and resist. The book under review does just that, and so do I. So does Mr.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Kristol in his own way. He admits that advertising technique, "with its absurd equation of hedonism and happiness—offends both my intellect and my sensibilities," but is quite content to see others drifting into what may be a fool's paradise. . . .

The point is that the forces we are being subjected to are still authoritarian, even if they do result in a pleasant mental state, the end being achieved by means which I detest. One's mental state is being changed by virtue of such a force, and not by virtue of the thing itself. One is being given that extra satisfaction by the advertiser's science, not by a really superior type of tobacco. As for the nice distinction between a random choice of one of a selection of differently labelled identical goods jostling for our attention: if we want to be mathematical about it, a choice determined by an irrelevant variable, as opposed to a random variable, is sufficient to combat the mass-psychoanalysts' cleverness.

But Mr. Kristol persists "They are then offering us something real and honest: the indulgence of a day-dream. And for that one gladly pays." One pays for it in more ways than one. Admittedly, one or two illusions are not all harmful, but I find the idea of day-dreams being made for me peculiarly repugnant, and having the illusions identical to thousands of other people even worse. Worst of all is the idea of my illusions being created by self-seeking advertisers. Was it not Mark Twain who said that when everybody agrees, everybody is wrong?

To come back to the distinction between we being manipulated and the other side of the Iron Curtain being sat upon, and taking the above implications of "manipulated," and direct suppression which also indubitably occurs in Communist countries as "sat upon," then both ingredients exist side by side there, in different proportions in different parts. It does not release the "free" world from blame. Who could deny that the vast majority of Russians and Chinese accept their régimes unquestioningly? They, too, are taught to base their judgments on material and technological values, and these are demonstrably on the upgrade, and so they do not rise up in indignant protest. They admit that the régime has made mistakes in the past, horrible mistakes, but things are looking up. Admittedly there are signs that a minority of intellectuals are beginning to question this state of affairs, but they have little influence. Admittedly, Hungary and other East European satellites are being sat upon, but can we even condone that aspect of totalitarianism which produces this illusory self-satisfaction in that inert majority who do not rise up in protest? Can we, then, condone the aspect of Western society which in its turn induces an equally illusory mental state?

J. Gordon

King's College
London, W.C.2

I must admit to some genuine astonishment at Irving Kristol's review of *The Hidden Persuaders* (Encounter, December 1957). Beyond the confession that he enjoys American advertising, particularly Maidenform Bra ads, he hardly deals adequately with the few simple themes presented by Mr. Packard. It is certain that the people on Madison Avenue do not know very much about the complex psychological phenomena they claim to manipulate. Little evidence exists to validate their claims for the "depth approach" as they use it or for the results they purport to accomplish. No one knows this better than the professional social scientist; in general, he has tended to laugh off Mr. Packard's shrill warnings because of this. However, some social scientists do not laugh at the potentiality for increasing influence which lies in the hands of advertisers as their technicians learn more, increase their rigor, refine their controls, and cull the latest research findings. Working with experiments on communication and attitude change on a day-to-day basis makes one less inclined to view social scientists as hiding their heads in failure. I wish I could be as sanguine as Mr. Kristol about it all. Surely, Mr. Kristol would not take the withdrawal of Ford Foundation support as an indication of the impotence of social science. How much have practical or philanthropic policy-makers ever understood the subtleties of non-obvious research?

Mr. Kristol appears to think that since Americans identify hedonism with happiness, advertising at least makes this mad pursuit agreeable. It is this which I find most objectionable in Mr. Kristol's review. In his haste to assure us that after all, we have to buy something, and that advertisers only present alternatives, he gives a very static view of the influence process. The point is, advertising also *helps to create the motives which it satisfies*, or at least helps to change them. By bombarding the public with calls to buy, trade in, exchange, and so forth, advertisers shape the kinds of alternatives people are exposed to and their future capacity to seek new and perhaps different alternatives. In effect, to use Mr. Kristol's terms, advertisers do help to form moral positions by the kinds of needs and goals they manipulate. By what rationale can this be a desirable form of moral growth and change? . . .

Arthur R. Cohen

Yale University
New Haven, Connecticut

The treason of the clerks reached a new low when a writer can, like Mr. Irving Kristol, defend American advertising methods. The invasion of mental privacy by advertising is already so well-established that we no longer dream of drawing attention to, let alone protesting against, the brandishing of slogans and colours before our eyes, the dinning into our ears of inane slogans and the rest of the ceaseless bombardment on pre-occupied, worried, and exhausted minds throughout the day. But now Mr. Kristol comes to defend the use of a more subtle attack on the mind in the form of subliminal advertising and the very periodical which has pompously protested against this attack when it takes the form of brain-washing and indoctrination by antagonistic politics justifies it when it is used by Big Business. This contradiction can of course be explained by the fact that

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mr. Kristol is an American trying to persuade us as to the excellence of the American Way of Life, the new business paternalism which induced Americans to believe that to be patriotic one must be supporters of the system by which Big Brothers rule American commerce (and who were, no less than Stalin, in Orwell's mind when he wrote *1984*, a fact that American admirers of his book tend to forget). Mr. Kristol is apparently well-conditioned. But the rest of us may still be able to see, even though he cannot, the difference between being able to make a free choice of a product and having that choice influenced through the mind being flustered by the shouts of hucksters and subliminal whispers. In the last few years we have had inquiries which have revealed the falsity of the claims made for cigarettes and toothpastes in advertisements. And even if a rooted objection in the mind to a product cannot be eradicated by subliminal advertising, what if there is no rooted objection to things which are nevertheless harmful, like sadistic or pornographic literature, hashish, or another Hitler? But Mr. Kristol has no qualms about a method which can reach the deepest realms of the subconscious in the interests of commerce. I believe that it is time to protest when science is misused for commercial reasons. Mr. Kristol's morality has become so distorted that he can equate seduction when it takes the form of a personal relationship between consenting individuals with a form of it taken by calculating organisations on an unsuspecting public and achieved by means very close to drugging and hypnotism. We are aware of the American belief deriving from a Puritan-capitalist background that sex is sin, the brain is pure, and profit-making a virtue. But even D. H. Lawrence's definition of obscenity as "sex in the head" did not anticipate the obscenity of tinkering with the brain in the interests of commerce nor the depravity of journalists who would justify it. For the ethics and economic good sense (or lack of them) in the doctrine of always buying something new, I recommend Mr. Kristol to read the article by Kenneth Rexroth in the American *Nation* of 8th September, 1956, entitled, "Borrow, Spend, Buy, Waste, Want."

HENRY ADLER

London, S.W.7

[*Mr. Kristol replies:*

Psychiatrists use the term *Angstlust* to describe a state of mind in which pleasure is derived from fear. This condition seems to be almost a part of intellectual life to-day. Literary men who themselves never look at television, who insist that their wives do all the shopping, and who are generally "ad-blind" when they happen to glance through a popular magazine will write with uncontrollable anguish about how "we" are being manipulated by these mysterious agencies on Madison Avenue and elsewhere. Well, at the risk of seeming immodest, I will say flatly that *I* am not being so manipulated. Furthermore, I have my doubts about all those who stridently claim to be: were they telling the truth, the incidence of ulcers among advertising men would be far lower than it is.

Having written in my review that "I can think of nothing to say for advertising in principle," and that Americans are credulous to think "that the Good Life consists of lots of manufactured things, all of which can be bought," I naturally find it odd to be accused of composing apologies for advertising and the American Way of Life, to say nothing of Maidenform brassières. I have never regarded myself as an apologist for anyone or anything; though I must admit, candidly, that I can think of nothing to say against Maidenform.

I do believe, however, that I ought to make my position clearer on subliminal advertising. In my review, I dismissed it rather summarily, as not being able to do what some people feared it might. I remain thoroughly sceptical of its powers. But if it should indeed turn out to be influential, I would certainly be in favour of suppressing it—though I wish I knew just how that could be done when governments as well as advertising agencies turned their hands to it, as governments inevitably would. Nor do my correspondents appear to have any useful suggestions to make, on this matter.

Some marginal notes:

1. Mr. Gordon asks: "Who would deny that the vast majority of Russians and Chinese accept their régimes unquestioningly?" I would, for one. I don't think that the "vast majority" of any people accept any régime *unquestioningly*. As the experience of the various "thaws" has revealed, the Russians and Chinese people are no less talented than any other at plaguing their governments with embarrassing questions, when they are free to do so.

2. I quite agree with Mr. Cohen that advertising creates false "needs." Mr. Packard, on the other hand, differs from us both: he is all for advertising but dislikes the newer methods. The point of my review was that his position is untenable. Morally, the new advertising is no worse than the old; and it is in some ways more agreeable.

3. Mr. Adler's letter, in its style and tone, made me nostalgic with remembrance of decades past. My only worry is that he may not really exist, and that his letter was intended as a clever parody.]

"Some Japanese Observations"

THERE is great danger in judging a person or a nation from a yardstick that you alone possess but which the other fellow does not recognise. There is danger in the assumption that your yardstick is absolute! From material standards where there are statistical and mathematical calculations, judgments are based on a fair claim. But in the realm of sensibilities and metaphysics, who can claim to pass judgment? Such "observations" are doomed to be invalid. Such is the case, I feel, with "Some Japanese Observations" made by Stephen Spender and Angus Wilson.

Stephen Spender observes: "One thing I failed to discern was the faintest whiff of religion."

The Japanese do not wear their emotions on their sleeve and neither do they their religion. The religion of the Japanese people is Shinto—the

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Divine Way. This was capsulised as follows by Hayashi Razan, the 17th-century scholar: "The Deity is the Spirit of Heaven and Earth. The human mind partaking of divinity is an abode of the Deity which is the Spiritual Essence. There exists no highest deity outside the human mind."

Because there is no hierarchy (especially since the Emperor un-deified himself) and temples do not have an elaborate ritual, and because Shinto preserves no dogma, it is indeed understandable that the casual observer is struck with the non-existence of religion. Especially if he is used to an Established Church, ritual, clergy with a special dress, cathedrals, and all the laws of religion that are part of his cultural inheritance.

That religion in Japan "is far more broken down and for longer than with us" as Angus Wilson observes, is just not so. The only thing that has broken down since the war is the myth that the Emperor is God incarnate. But that the human mind is an abode of the Deity, is very deeply rooted indeed and an integral part of Shinto.

Early Shinto was essentially Nature worship. That is why the custom of cherry-blossom viewing, red-maple tree viewing, and new moon viewing at harvest time, are essentially religious. The ethico-intellectualistic aspect of Shinto came later with Buddhism. But in the "tea making and the flower decoration," Wilson sees only an "arty and 'tatty'" expression. To minds preoccupied with positive values these would, no doubt, seem to have "unfortunate qualities."

But hours spent in repose of mind, creating a pattern from Nature or handling bowls that were made with love as one does at a tea ceremony, have the merit that the temple is being decorated and observed *within the mind*, and not as an extraneous edifice.

The outward signs of change toward Western ideas and the adoption of Western methods in various ways does not necessarily portend any basic change in the concept of living. The Japanese are inordinately fond of novelties and "toys" and Western ideas represent just these. . . .

TERRY HILL

London, W.8

[*Mr. Spender writes:* It so happens that by the same mail as we received the above letter, I received a letter from a Japanese friend, to whom I had put the half-facetious question—How do you feel yourself different from me in being Japanese? I quote this extract from his letter, which friends who know Japan well, tell me is not untypical. It comes from a young Japanese school-teacher who has never left his country:

"You asked me to say something about when, how, and why I feel a Japanese, which, as you said, ought to distinguish between you and me. But even now I can hardly state the difference in a plain and exact manner. One of the difficulties of finding something very solid and very Japanese in myself may be this: that I have seldom thought about it. A number of writers have written about the difference between things European and Japanese, but I don't think the difference is so important. And this, perhaps this may come out from the fact that I have a continual liking for literature, for literature has to do essentially, with humanity, and this humanity, though it has various aspects, is not so much different from one man in one country to another in another country. Before approaching, for example, your own works, I think perhaps something extraordinary to me may be unfolded, but I don't find such a thing; I find many many things which I feel very close to you, and so I am impressed; if what impresses me is quite a different sort of thing from the way in which I think, and feel, I shall not be impressed at all, as I understand the word *impress*. As you know, since the dawn of the *Meiji* era when European civilisation began to pour into this country, we have done almost nothing but to study the European culture, and since I was an elementary schoolboy, I've learned European things, so that at present, what you think very European towards me is nothing but Japanese, as I think very many Japanese feel so. So you must persuade yourself that what you find in me very European is what I feel actually in Japan—that is not European at all to me. I think perhaps when I grow much older, I may nostalgically look back to the passed many years—the years at least before the beginning of the *Meiji* era.

The talk about the Japanese house, clothing, meals, and such external things will not so much impress you, I think. About the spiritual things in me, I can hardly find anything remarkably Japanese; for example, I don't feel for Buddhism or for Shinto nor for Christianity for which I once felt very enthusiastically several years ago. I am afraid I am sophisticated, but at other times I am very naïve and frank. I don't have any particular fixed goal or any permanent principle to which I myself aspire. The most important thing about me is that I feel very much for good literature, and that I myself want to accomplish something with literature."]

L'Affaire Djilas

"WHO is responsible for this translation?" asks R. H. S. Crossman in his article "Standing Marx on His Head," in the October ENCOUNTER. His question is enough to make the bravest editor quake. But, in accepting major responsibility for the editing of the Djilas book, *The New Class*, I prefer to stand firm.

For one thing, I believe Mr. Crossman is in error. He fears that *The New Class* will be largely unintelligible "except to those who have been thoroughly grounded in Communist methodology . . . and well enough acquainted with international Marxist jargon." I do not know the sales figures of the English-language edition around the world but, in the United States, over 125,000 copies of the book are now in print. (This includes Book of the Month Club distribution.) Which would Mr. Crossman expect us to believe: that 120,000 Americans are

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"thoroughly grounded in Communist methodology . . . and international Marxist jargon" or that 100,000 persons, say, are willing to pay perfectly good money for a book they cannot possibly understand? I think it much more likely that Mr. Crossman has grievously underestimated the intelligence of the general reader. Or else he has overestimated the difficulties of reading the Djilas book, now in its fifteenth week high up on the *New York Times* best-seller list.

To bolster his point, Mr. Crossman gives an example of some turgid prose appearing in *The New Class*. He is right about his example—it is almost impossible to understand. We knew it when editing the manuscript and we left it that way. Our reason was simple. Djilas was in a Belgrade prison and courting a lengthier sentence, since handed down, when we were editing the book in New York. Usual queries for clarification were impossible. When we could not make sense of the literal translation from the Serbo-Croatian—surely Mr. Crossman knows about differences in conceptual thinking—we did the only thing possible and honest. We neither guessed nor deleted—we followed the literal translation. What would Mr. Crossman have us do and still be faithful to a brave spirit?

Mr. Crossman might have found, much more easily, quotations in *The New Class* that are easy to understand, graphic—and moving. *Reader's Digest* and *Life* magazine, two extremely popular American magazines, had no trouble in finding many such passages, and using them extensively. (On a recent European trip, I was embarrassed by a criticism just contrary to that of Mr. Crossman's. An eminent European said to me, "Puner, you've gone too far in popularising Djilas—you must be one of those American comic book editors." I am not, although I hear such editing pays well.)

Mr. Crossman says nasty things about the translation of *The New Class* as well as its editing. I feel no need to defend the translator. But I am curious to know how Mr. Crossman reached his judgment. How on earth did he, in England, get hold of the one original manuscript in Serbo-Croatian? How did he ever manage to read it?

MORTON PUNER

Teaneck, N.J.
U.S.A.

During 1957 two novels stood out from all others.
Among first novels, John Braine's

ROOM AT THE TOP

and, among the work of established writers, Patrick White's

VOSS

It is a rare event for any book to receive such a storm of praise from the critics and also to be bought and read by as many people as were these two books

EYRE & SPOTTISWOODE

are proud to have published them both.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOKS

Tibor Déry

NIKI, a short novel "about a dog," by the dean of Hungarian letters, Tibor Déry, is now on its road to world fame. It has been published in various languages; its French translation,* by Imre László, has been awarded the Halperine-Kaminsky prize of 1957, given each year for the best translation into French; its English version is to be published before long in both Britain and the United States. Would it ever have started on such a career but for the publicity showered upon its author as a hero of the Hungarian Resistance and a victim of Soviet oppression? No one can say. It certainly has considerable merit besides that of having been written by one who is now serving a nine-year prison sentence for "leading an organisation aiming at the overthrow of the State order." But whether this merit of a piece of fiction in an "unusual" language would have—in the normal course of events—caught the attention of publishers, reviewers, and readers in "usual" languages, cannot even be guessed. Since authors are usually vain creatures (or, which means the same thing, believers in their own calling) Déry has reason to congratulate himself on the jumping-off ground for world recognition provided by his privations and sufferings. An increased self-respect, and confidence in the moral significance of his work, might well comfort him in his present ordeal. I am, however, unable to share in this comfort, if it exists. First, because it is heart-rending to imagine that 64-year-old writer being bullied and buffeted in cold and dingy cells which I have known only too well; and second, because it makes it almost impossible for me to approach his work with that unrhetorical detachment it deserves. Shall I nevertheless try? I think I should: for the ambition of a vain (or, which again means the same thing, uncompromising) writer is to be a match, not only for tyrants and thugs, but also for reviewers.

Déry has always been an uncompromising writer, although it has not always been clear what particular ideas he was serving when refusing to compromise with the others. He has always been a rebel, of a special kind. Of all human rights, those of gambling, making love, and indulging in eccentric fantasies seemed most to interest him. His obstinacy in creating works which were not supposed to appeal either to the rulers, or, until recently, to the masses was an act of heroism in the service of a completely unheroic vision of life. His first clash with the State that I know of took place during the First World War, when the leading literary magazine in Hungary decided to publish a *risqué* story by the then absolutely unknown young man; the subsequent confiscation of that number of the magazine drew attention to his name. Later, after the collapse of the Béla Kun régime of 1919, he spent years of exile in Vienna, Berlin, and Paris, involved in the variegated "ism"s then being spawned by the avant-garde and which were wedded in most countries to extreme left-wing political ideas. But he did not, even then, seem to be concerned with politics proper. He returned to Hungary towards the end of the 'twenties, I think. He was not molested by the police: to sing the praises of "Revolution" in an esoteric, highbrow language understood by no one was technically a crime, but one which even the block-headed officials of the Horthy régime contemptuously tolerated. For his radicalism he was punished by hardly ever seeing his work in print.

I happened during that period to know some of his unprinted as well as his printed writings, and can say to their credit that they used to be shocking. I cannot honestly say that I found them to be correspondingly interesting. They were overflooded with a bawdy and facetious

* *Niki ou l'histoire d'un chien*. Édition du Seuil, Paris, VI. The translator's name on the cover is in fact a collective pen-name of several persons who did the work in common, amongst them M. László Gara, a most enthusiastic and competent populariser of Hungarian literature in France.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

imagery which, to me, was as tiresome after twenty minutes as it was exciting for five. The enthusiasm which Déry then expressed for Communism struck me, wrongly perhaps, merely as a means whereby he could give some tangible shape to the compassion he felt for everything blacklisted in respectable society. Even when I read some really beautiful chapters of a novel of his, dealing with the life and struggles of workers in the Vienna Council blocks and the Paris suburbs, my impression was that his sympathy with and for his proletarian characters, though sincere enough, originated in a passion to discover the picturesque in the shabby rather than a desire to redeem the shabby from shabbiness. Only once did I accidentally hear a confession, sounding quite surprising from his mouth, of his being "always moved when thinking of the efforts made by the Russian people." This happened at about the same time that he translated Gide's *Retour de l'URSS*, the book for which its author was decried as a reactionary Trotskyite in Moscow, and its translator imprisoned for six months as a Bolshevik in Budapest. The Hungarian prosecution was, no doubt, idiotic; but I suspect that Déry, in the dock, tacitly agreed with its charges. To describe uninhibitedly the disappointments of a sympathiser in Russia: this *was*, he must have felt, a kind of propaganda for what he cared for in Russia. Did not Gide, too, say that he had after all been *moved*?

By the end of the war Déry had finally matured as a writer; but then came the pressure of "Socialist Realism" to distort his work. The rôle meted out to him was that of a Hungarian Gorki; and, alas, he took it seriously. But even as early as 1948 he began refusing to conform completely with the Party's orders on literature. It was his "petty bourgeois deviation" that was the main subject on the agenda of the Hungarian Writers' Congress in 1952. At that same time, A.V.O. officers were giving me considerable annoyance in prison, trying to extort from me a "confession" about Déry, "that police spy of the Horthy Government." In the event, Déry was spared; the Party leadership decided that he should be allowed, as Gorki had been allowed by Lenin, to deviate from time to time, so as to have the opportunity of ceremonially repenting of his sins later in public.

Then came the Thaw. Whatever its results otherwise, Hungarian literature is much indebted to it. Communist writers discovered the possibility of speaking their minds without thereby necessarily forfeiting the good-will of the Soviet Union, a good-will on which their careers were based. There is no reason to doubt that some joined in the new fashion of outspokenness for the same opportunist calculations that had previously made them Stalin's sycophants. "Who would dare to-day not to be brave?" asked a witty cabaret writer, Dezsö Kellér, in September, 1956. Indeed, as in the Britain of Dunkirk, moral grandeur grew into a national epidemic which infected saints and rascals alike. It penetrated so deeply into the social body that there was no stopping it. The most inspiring spokesman of the Communist revolt against Communist oppression, the playwright, Gyula Háy, who is now with Déry in prison, made a solemn pledge that "we shall never lie again"; sentences from his article, "Why Don't I Like Comrade Kucsera?" directed against the Stalinist *apparatchik*, spread like Churchillian formulas against the people. Society as a whole, and especially the Republic of Letters, was in a state of effervescence.

To some like Déry, this meant the freedom to write as he liked. The Thaw liberated him from both his pre-1945 obsession and his post-1945 pose. He wrote more carefully, with a finer balance than ever before; he went out of his way to discover those profound, personal emotions obscured in his previous writings either by excessive indiscipline or by a half-hearted acceptance of Party discipline. He made a giant step in the direction of humanity; and at once arrived at a dog. The subject is a commonplace; authors so different in outlook and style as Anatole France and Maeterlinck, Jack London and Thomas Mann, were all tempted by the possibilities inherent in describing a creature that is no less involved in human relations than the human being himself, but is still utterly different from them. Here is an inarticulate creature, craving for love, naïvely cruel, obtrusively affectionate, uninhibited both in selfishness and in self-devotion; an author cannot help discovering in its adventures, with some smiles and tears, the rudiments of the human condition. There may be moments and circumstances when such an approach serves to outlive the roots of religion, or of greed, or the sense of subordination, in men. In the Hungary of 1956, it served to reveal the roots of tenderness in man.

Can the Western reader imagine that this should have been a revolutionary act? To understand this, one should bear in mind that it followed two decades during which hatred of some kind—on the Hitlerite or the Stalinist pattern—had been ranked amongst the duties of a loyal citizen. In the period of the mass arrests by the A.V.O., in 1949–1953, to have compassion on any of the victims was labelled as a crime itself. "I hope you are clever enough to know that, except ourselves, there is no one to help you," a grinning A.V.O. officer told me in prison. "Once somebody is behind these prison gates,

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Memoirs of a Public Baby

PHILIP O'CONNOR

With an Introduction by Stephen Spender

Philip O'Connor's autobiography is both an extraordinarily frank self-revelation and a distinguished piece of literature. There is pungent evocation of a wildly unorthodox childhood, of the literary underworld in the 'Thirties, of bitterly involved personal relationships, of the borderland between sanity and madness. And every page is sharply stamped with the narrator's highly original personality. 18/-

Collected Poems

MICHAEL ROBERTS

This collection has been arranged and edited by the poet's widow, Janet Adam Smith. She has prefaced the poems with a long biographical memoir. (FEB 14) 18/-

The Antiphon

DJUNA BARNES

A verse play by the author of *Nightwood.* "I feel myself that *The Antiphon* is one of the greatest things that have been written in our time." EDWIN MUIR. (JAN 31) 18/-

The Birds

ARISTOPHANES

An English version by Dudley Fitts

This fresh translation of Aristophanes' barbed comedy about Cloudcuckooland takes its place beside Mr Fitts's highly successful versions of the LYSISTRATA and THE FROGS. (JAN 31) 15/-

— FABER & FABER —

no one—*no one*—cares about him." How can people bear such a world? They can because they must, Déry answers in his novel; but dogs cannot.

This is the moral of his lovely story which he tells with as little melodrama as possible. He uses the tone, tongue-in-cheek, of a solemn and unemotional narrator of biological events, and of a philosopher who doubts everything except the fact that animals must not be mistaken for human. He claims to be doing nothing but presenting the life story of a bitch, a fox-terrier, Niki by name, whose master, an engineer, is one day arrested by the police and five years later released without being told why on either occasion. His wife, though aged and worn, is able to survive until his return. But Niki dies. She had not always been unhappy during these five years, she had not always seemed to mind her vanished master; the novel does not demonstrate the superhuman virtues of a pet but rather the sub-human humiliations endured by the human.

I wonder whether, only some weeks after the mournful excitement about the dog sacrificed in Sputnik II, I should draw attention to one of its fellow creatures, the fox-terrier called Niki, after whom the heroine of Déry's novel was modelled. She is, according to my most recent information, still alive in Budapest and in good health; I assume she misses her imprisoned master no more and no less than does her fictitious *alter ego*; but I hope she will be more fortunate in seeing him again.

Paul Ignotus

The Hindu Personality

The Twice-Born. By G. MORRIS CARSTAIRS. *Hogarth Press.* 30s.

DR. Morris Carstairs' intensive study of thirteen Rajputs, eleven Brahmins, and twelve Banias, men living in the small village of "Deoli" near Udaipur in the State of Mewar, is a book of major importance not only to students of psychology and anthropology but also potentially to all who are occupied on any level with the problems of international relations. It may seem rather ludicrous to suggest that the study of 36 men in a village of 2,417 inhabitants (with 36 castes divided into 594 households and 40 temples) will give valuable information about the inhabitants and policies of the second most populous country in the world; but I believe

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that this book does provide additional insight into the pronouncements and behaviour of Nehru's India.

The importance of *The Twice-Born* lies in the fact that it is the first attempt to state in a systematic fashion the shared regularities of character which can be discerned in members of the dominant Hindu castes. At the same time it considerably illuminates the manner in which caste membership modifies the character of its members; and since the Western countries in which scientific psychology has developed have no true castes (the Whites in the Southern United States treat the Negroes as though they were a caste, but this attitude does not seem to be reciprocated) this adds another dimension to our understanding of the possible variations of human psychology. One further dimension, that of age-grading, where individual behaviour is determined by chronological age, rather than by social status or by invariant moral imperatives, has so far not been systematically studied by psychologists.

It must be stressed that the importance of this book lies in its systematic character, in the fact that anybody with qualifications similar to Dr. Carstairs' should be able to achieve similar results; he explains what he has done and how he has done it, and nearly half his book consists of a verbatim selection of his raw material. The insights gained are not so subtle nor so profound as those of some writers who have dealt with the Indian scene, such as, for example, Rudyard Kipling, E. M. Forster, or J. R. Ackerley; but they are far more usable. While we are reading we feel that we understand, as well as we can understand another human being, Aziz or Kim's Old Lady of Kulu, but we cannot even attempt to generalise from this knowledge. In a similar context, when Sigmund Freud in his old age was being congratulated by an American writer on his great additions to knowledge, he replied *"das haben die Dichter immer gekannt"*—the poets, the imaginative writers, knew it all along. And this is true; but though beauty is lost in the shift from art to science, usable knowledge is gained; and articulateness about the variations of national character has the potentiality of making avoidable many of the misunderstandings and misinterpretations which now bedevil international relations.

In the case of Hindu India this modest addition to knowledge is particularly valuable, for it is probably true to say that for most Westerners who have thought at all on the subject, no society is more alien, more basically incomprehensible, than that of the Hindus. I do not mean by this that Hindus are generally considered less lovable or less admirable than the members of the other major societies who do not derive from the Greco-Roman-Hebrew tradition, for this would certainly not be true, indeed the contrary could be plausibly maintained; but they are generally considered stranger, invoking premises and acting on motives which we cannot comprehend. In the last resort, this strangeness would seem to lie in the almost total commingling of what we would consider religious concepts with every aspect of social, business, and political life; and the most striking manifestation of this commingling is the institution of caste, with its theocratically sanctified limitations of social status, occupation, choice of marriage partner and even eating companion, the ever present fear—for members of higher castes—of ritual pollution by their lower caste fellow-citizens and, for these latter, the endless circumspection their degraded position entails.

We learn quite a lot of what caste membership entails from Dr. Carstairs' analysis of the life-histories of the 36 male members of the three highest castes in the traditional Rajput village. The picture is not a complete one, for purdah prevented Dr. Carstairs making any direct observations of high caste Hindu women; and although we are told that Mrs. Carstairs helped with the village census, she apparently was not able to give more concrete information; we only see the women through the men's eyes. Even more regrettably, Dr. Carstairs did not make (or at any rate has not published) any observations on children of either sex; childhood is reconstituted from reminiscences. Dr. Carstairs, in short, has worked preponderantly as a psychiatrist, which is his chief professional speciality; although he has studied social anthropology, indeed his book is throughout informed with anthropological theory, he did not take advantage of being "in the field," of being in a position to observe the interaction of identified individuals, to counterpoint and cross-check the reminiscences and explanations of his best informants. On the other hand, thanks to his psychiatric training and the fact that Urdu was his first language (he was born in India of missionary parents) the material he did get from his informants is of very high quality indeed; in the whole of anthropological literature there are very few life-histories as complete as the three published in *The Twice-Born*; and, to the best of my knowledge, the number of inter-locking life-histories from a single community is unparalleled.

The nearest analogy which I can discover to being born into a high Hindu caste is being born into an ancient aristocratic family, but greatly intensified and extended. The typical behaviour and attitudes which a caste member *should* show are very concretely known to every person the infant or child comes into contact with; and he

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

will be praised or blamed, rewarded or punished, for behaving like a Rajput, or Brahmin, or Bania, rather than for being "good" or "bad." The ideal which is offered to the growing child by everybody in contact with him, so that he will almost certainly approximate to it, is extremely precise and detailed, in contrast to the vague models held up to Western children: being a little gentleman, or a good boy, or well-adjusted, and so on.

Caste membership does not destroy individuality, as we understand the term, but it very greatly restricts the field within which individuality can be manifested. Some castes have traditional variants in the techniques of child-rearing which can help to perpetuate the ideal type; thus the Rajputs who are expected to be war-like, lustful, and tough are brought up from a very early age by male "nurses," whereas Brahmins and Banias are instructed by their mothers, and even more their grandmothers. Dr. Carstairs also describes in persuasive detail the differing typical relationships between father and son which characterises each caste.

"Acceptance of one's place in the caste system was unquestioning. It was a part of the order of nature. A Rajput might be (and generally was) proud of the reputation of his clan; but only rarely could he add to it with a conspicuous feat of valour. A Bania might hope to amass a fortune and to have his death celebrated with prodigiously meritorious feasts, but he would always remain a merchant; whereas a Brahmin was born already a god, and his only ambition was to attain Release. The non-hereditary occupations cut across these old forms, but in the village at least each person has the assurance of knowing that if he refuses to compete, preferring to conform to his traditional caste rôle, he will be able to perform a task which is not exacting and can rely on the approval, and ultimately the support of his fellows even though his material rewards may be pitifully small. The old system puts a premium on conformity at the expense of personal initiative: the individual achieves integration and stability in his life habits by adhering to the pattern of his enveloping society, rather than by asserting his own personality."

The castes are complementary within the Hindu social system; each of them needs, at least theoretically, the services of all the others if the society as a whole is to survive. And the danger that these endogamous groups, with their strongly contrasting attitudes and traditions, might become too different to function as a single society is obviated by the shared rituals and beliefs of Hinduism, by which castes are justified, and by the typical composition of the family group and treatment of infants and young children; Dr. Carstairs found many regularities in these areas of life in the three castes which he studied; and from these he derives the shared elements of Hindu character, and the congruence of Hindu religious beliefs with the unconscious wishes generated by the typical experiences of Hindu children.

A high-caste Hindu marriage is arranged by the parents, without attention being paid to the young people's preferences, and the bride is brought into the house of the groom's parents. Both husband and wife must be completely submissive towards the parents and in their presence should display no emotion either towards one another or to their children when they have them. (The unhappiness entailed by such constraint is most movingly and illuminatingly described in the autobiography of the Bania, Shri Puranmal Meta. Meta comes from Jaipur and was not one of Dr. Carstairs' informants from "Deoli"; he volunteered his autobiography, written in "Babu" English, from which Dr. Carstairs has excerpted fifty pages; this chapter is a masterpiece of self-expression and self-revelation, the book would be worth reading for this alone, though all the preceding pages illuminate it.) *"In family life, as in religion, great stress is laid on submission, resignation, and obedience. Emotional relationships are played down, but one's obligations towards other family members are underlined."*

Since high-caste Hindus observe purdah, the only place where a young married couple are likely to be alone together is the bedroom, with the only bond between them that of sexual intercourse. And this bond is bedevilled by the Hindu religious obsession about bodily secretions and excretions. Apart from semen, all the products of the human body are contaminating, polluting; all the processes of the toilet are surrounded with elaborate ritual whose non-observance would entail religious impurity and social ostracism. Semen on the other hand is considered to be the essence of a man's strength and vitality while he retains it in his body; if he lets it go he is to that extent depleted.

"Everyone knew that semen was not easily formed; it takes forty days, and forty drops of blood, to make one drop of semen; but the process was variously described.... Everyone was agreed on one point, that the semen is ultimately stored in a reservoir in the head, whose capacity is twenty tolas (6·8 ounces). Semen of good quality is rich and viscous, like the cream of unadulterated milk. A man who possesses such a store of good semen becomes a super-man.... Celibacy was the first requirement of true fitness, because every sexual orgasm means the loss of a quantity of semen, laboriously formed. Here was another inescapable dilemma, because one's sons must be procreated, one's wife satisfied."

Since this series of beliefs has scriptural

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

authority, it is not surprising that there is very widespread neurotic anxiety about all aspects of sexual activity, and widespread fears of "loss of virility" or spermatorrhœa; 25 of Dr. Carstairs' 36 Hindu informants either believed that they suffered from spermatorrhœa or else described special measures which they adopted to counteract it. These beliefs too make it almost inevitable that a man's attitude to his wife is bound to be deeply ambivalent, since she is emptying his reservoir of health; women are believed to have stronger sexual desires than men, and it is a husband's duty to keep his wife satisfied, lest she seek satisfaction elsewhere.

When a child is born into this uneasy relationship, it becomes for a period the most important member of the family, King Baby. For at least the first year of its life it is indulged and satisfied to an extent which is unparalleled in any Western country. An infant's mother is his willing slave, and he becomes something of a tyrant. During the second year of life, the mother's behaviour becomes more variable; the child is physically replaced by the father as the mother's bed-companion and (though Dr. Carstairs does not elaborate this point) he is usually displaced by a younger brother or sister. For Dr. Carstairs this typical sequence—maximum indulgence by the mother, alteration in the mother's behaviour, almost complete and relatively sudden displacement by the father—is the central clue for the understanding of the main typical characteristics of high-caste Hindu men and of many of the main features of Hindu religion.

"I suggest that this relatively late reversal of a previously dominating (although emotionally inconsistent) relationship with his mother has a profound effect upon the child's later development. The underlying mistrust which seems to cloud so many of my informants' adult personal relationships may well be derived from the phantasy of a fickle mother who mysteriously withholds her caresses and attentions from time to time; but at weaning the child's emotional insecurity is suddenly intensified. Early experience has created in his phantasy a bias in favour of feeling that things will come right in the end (the breast will not long be withheld) but now the two most certain-seeming facts of life—the mother's constant support and the child's own omnipotence—suddenly prove unreliable. It is as if he were accustomed again and again to climb a certain step and then suddenly found the step no longer there. His confidence is shattered and from now on he mistrusts everything that pretends to constancy—his own and others' personalities, and even objects in the material world. To such a feeling the concept of all-pervading Maya seems appropriate, if not inevitable.

"In contrast with the Western child whose familiarity with intermittent experiences of frustration and delayed satisfaction has enabled him to indulge his aggressive fantasies in moderation, only to be reassured by his mother's renewed affectionate attentions, this desertion on the part of the mother seems a final one. In his phantasy she becomes someone terrible, bloodthirsty and demanding *in the same limitless way as the formerly imperious child. As the Goddess* [*Kali*] *she is seen as a horrific figure, decapitating men and drinking their blood....*

"There is a corollary to this catastrophic reversal of the infant's blissful situation. In order to recapture it in phantasy he must become a helpless child again as he does when prostrating himself before the Mother-Goddess; and this is also the essence of a Hindu's attitude towards his father and his Guru, and in his religious worship. In each of these situations he stresses on the one hand his utter helplessness, his unlimited appeal, and on the other his ruthless suppression of his own sexuality, and with it all his sensual gratifications. When confronted with this complete surrender, the deity, the father, and the Guru are compelled to offer help; the tyranny of early childhood reasserts itself....

"I have already suggested that it is in the seeming 'betrayal' by a child's mother that we must seek the explanation of the lack of empathy, and the prevailing uncertainty of mind which so forcibly impressed me in Deoli; but it is in his accommodation to the stress of intense œdipal

Everyman's
Dictionary of Literary Biography:
English and American

by D. C. Browning M.A., B.LITT.

New compilation replacing the old Short Biographical Dictionary of English Literature in Everyman's Library. The 2,250 entries cover in one volume in *Everyman's Reference Library* the entire range of English and American literature from earliest times to the present day. 20/-

★

Another detective story by

Sebastian Fox

Odd Woman Out

George Lydney, the rosy-cheeked solicitor, is again the unofficial investigator, with his old friend Chief Inspector Jannock and other entertaining characters in a surprising sequence of events. 13/6

DENT

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rivalry with his father, that the pattern of his adult paranoid trends can be discerned....

"An interesting aspect of the deification of the cow (which represents the wholly gratifying mother of one's earliest recollection) is the way in which the rôle of her consort, the bull, is minimised. He is a benevolent nonentity, as is the child's father during the first year of life...."

I have given this long series of quotations from adjacent pages in the central chapter "Unconscious Processes," for it illustrates better than any paraphrase both the strengths and the weaknesses of Dr. Carstairs' approach. His observations on the behaviour of his adult informants could hardly be bettered; they are shrewd, precise, and most richly documented. As he describes his informants' self-contradictoriness, the constant shifting of emotional relationships, the quarrels and enthusiasms which spurt up and die down so suddenly, the lack of fixity of purpose, the courtesy, the highmindedness, one is constantly struck with a feeling of conviction, of recognition that what he says is true and typical; and when, as he occasionally does, he illustrates his theme from sayings or actions of Hindu politicians he gives a flash of illumination. The close interweaving of aspects of individual psychology with the beliefs and practices of Hinduism is not only most ingenious but extremely relevant to the understanding of the commingling of religious concepts with every aspect of social, business, and political life to which I referred earlier: and, to the best of my knowledge, no previous study of national character, or indeed of individual psychology, approaches the richness of Dr. Carstairs' work in this respect. But I personally am not fully satisfied with the explanation of the means by which these attitudes are elicited and maintained in the new members of the Hindu community. Although the reconstruction (and it must be emphasised that the accounts of the vicissitudes of infancy and childhood are purely reconstructed, and not supported by the observation of identified infants and children with their parents) may be substantially correct, I do not feel that it is complete.

This incompleteness would seem to be due to the theories with which Dr. Carstairs works. He went to Deoli as a psychiatrist trained in Adolphe Meyer's psycho-biology, an eclectic body of concepts, in which the variations of society or culture play practically no rôle. He also tried to apply a series of psychological tests which (like all such tests) have been developed in Western society, a word-association test which seems to have yielded very little, Rohrschach tests whose usefulness or validity outside the Western world is still unproven (though the protocols may yield clues, the interpretations do not appear to be revealing), and Raven's progressive matrices which, because they do not employ words, were supposed not to involve culture. Dr. Carstairs has shown conclusively (and this is a useful though negative finding) that success with these tests is very highly correlated with exposure to Western-style education, and so Western-style thought; the employment of these tests does not appear to have yielded any information commensurate with the time involved.

Before he went into the field, Dr. Carstairs tells us, his only experience of psycho-analysis was reading; but after his return he had a personal analysis from a follower of Mrs. Melanie Klein; and it is in the light of this subsequent experience and knowledge that he has interpreted his Hindu material. This is no place to question Mrs. Klein's theory or practice as it affects individual therapy; but as an instrument for the interpretation of the psychology of members of strange societies it seems a less valuable theory than orthodox Freudian psycho-analysis because of its almost exclusive reliance on the reconstruction of intra-psychic fantasies dating from the pre-verbal months of life. The maturation of the body is almost completely neglected and, it would seem, relatively little attention is paid to the actual relationships between the child and the people in his environment. If he had paid more attention to maturation, I do not think Dr. Carstairs would have been puzzled by the fact that, though Hindus treat the excreta and other bodily substances as magically contaminating and poisonous, they do not show the other symptoms of the obsessive character which is commonly associated with these attitudes in our society. All the rituals and beliefs connected with cleanliness and "purity" are imposed after the child has acquired good muscular control and quite a lot of language, and so there would be no theoretical reason to expect "halo" effects.

The great lacuna, however, in Dr. Carstairs' presentation is that he has made no attempt to describe the contents or severity of the (Freudian post-oedipal) super-ego, the strength and quality of the Hindu conscience, to use a common-speech phrase which covers some of the meanings. The material on guilt is slight and scattered, and a careful re-reading does not allow any precise formulation. There is a good deal of material on the strength of shame (the voiced or expected disapproval of identified others) as a social sanction of major importance; there is some data on the strength of the sense of sin, and much more on its antonym, the oceanic feeling of bliss which is the major goal of Hindu religious exercises; but on guilt the material is missing.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This lacuna is much more than a point of pedantic social psychology. As far as all the evidence available to us goes, it appears that a democracy only becomes and remains viable if the majority of the population has a strict and self-regulating conscience, so that public business can be carried on with mutual trust, without the necessity of either endless suspicion and supervision (and supervising of the supervisors *ad infinitum*) on the one hand or corruption and deception on the other. Because Dr. Carstairs has neglected to describe, if not to investigate, this aspect of his informants' personalities, his valuable book cannot be used for political forecasting.

Despite these omissions, I do not think there is anybody who can fail to learn a lot about Hindus from a careful reading of *The Twice-Born*; and not the least of its merits is that, as far as I can judge, it will be acceptable to Hindus themselves, who will surely take no offence at such understanding and sympathy.

Geoffrey Gorer

Sweeping the Interpreter's House

Anatomy of Criticism. By NORTHROP FRYE. *Princeton University Press. London: Oxford University Press.* 48s.

I MUST confess to having contemplated the 350 unopened pages of the *Anatomy of Criticism* with a sigh. Presumably another fatty from an American university press in which long- and well-gone-over ground is given another going-over just the same, and the well-languaged works of those who could write is quizzed by a non-writer in language that is not. "Close analysis": tabloid synopsis (the plot of the *Faerie Queene*; *Ulysses* or *Little by Little*): jejune stricture and juvenile dicta. The run of the American academic-literary mill (I reflected) surely provides about the maximum in reading-discomfort to the minimum of reader's-reward. And the warning on the jacket, that "the author proceeds on the assumption that criticism is a structure of thought and knowledge existing in its own right," sounded ominous indeed. One has read too many critical works which were only too evidently simply the unsubmerged portions of the icebergs of a monumental envy. A dry, sterile, cackling pettiness spread over them, which in effect simply caressed literature to death, and was ultimately intended to show that criticism not merely "exists in its own right" but

JONATHAN CAPE

Armies and Men

A Study of American Military History

'One of the most historically valuable, stimulatingly thoughtful and interesting books that I have read in recent years. A very fine piece of work—every chapter is full of significant and illuminating reflections.' *B. H. Liddell Hart*

25s. **WALTER MILLIS**

The Englishman's Food

Revised and with a new chapter by D. F. Hollingsworth. Preface by Dr. Norman C. Wright, C.B., D.SC. *Illustrations, 36s.*

J. C. DRUMMOND & ANNE WILBRAHAM

The Harington Family

'It is beautifully produced and illustrated and the meticulous research that has contributed to its making is documented unfussily. It is a joy to handle and to read.' ECONOMIST *Illustrated, 28s.*

Book Society Recommendation **IAN GRIMBLE**

Turkestan Alive

'. . . a good book, and an important one: packed with information of diverse kinds, leavened with good humour, and distinguished by the author's gift for precise and genial observation.' THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

Book Society Recommendation *Illustrated, 25s.*

BASIL DAVIDSON

new novels

The Hills of Beverly

A 'duchess' in Hollywood's modern court here reports the doings of Hollywood 'nobility'. *18s.*

LIBBIE BLOCK

Miss Hogg & the Dead Dean

Will entertain all those who enjoy Austin Lee's gallery of portraits, and his quickly moving, light-hearted narrative style. *13s. 6d.*

AUSTIN LEE

all prices are net

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is also quite independent of the literature it professes to concern itself with, is indeed superior to it, and should eventually supersede it. The *Anatomy of Criticism*, in fact, would only too probably prove to be no more than yet another Anatomy of Impotence.

Never was a sigh so quickly, firmly and definitely un-sighed. It is always frightening to jump, but I *will* jump and say that Professor Frye's book seems to me to be one of the very few important critical productions of my time. Its influence, I suppose, will almost inevitably be gradual, but it is likely to prove eventually one of those turning-points of which no art or science can expect to boast more than two or three or four in a century.

Anatomy of Criticism falls into two sections. The first, a mere thirty pages, is destructive. Professor Frye takes practically the whole of contemporary criticism and perfectly coolly and ironically, with the apparent casualness of absolute assurance and expertise, tips it down the sink. Thus:

Value-judgments are subjective in the sense that they can be indirectly but not directly communicated. When they are fashionable or generally accepted, they look objective, but that is all. The demonstrable value-judgment is the donkey's carrot of literary criticism, and every new critical fashion, such as the current fashion for elaborate rhetorical analysis, has been accompanied by a belief that criticism has finally devised a definitive technique for separating the excellent from the less excellent. But this always turns out to be an illusion of the history of taste. Value-judgments are founded on the study of literature; the study of literature can never be founded on value-judgments.

The reader will notice that Professor Frye's prose is everything that critical prose should be: sharp, spare, clear, precise, flexible, accurate without loss of wit. Indeed I even laughed aloud on a large number of occasions (and how often can a critical book make one do *that*?); as, for instance, at the charming exercise in which the reader is invited to

pick three big names at random, work out the eight possible combinations of promotion and demotion . . . and defend each in turn. Thus if the three names picked were Shakespeare, Milton, and Shelley, the agenda would run:

1. Demoting Shelley, on the ground that he is immature in technique and profundity of thought compared to the others.

2. Demoting Milton, on the grounds that his religious obscurantism and heavy doctrinal content impair the spontaneity of his utterance.

3. Demoting Shakespeare, on the ground that his detachment from ideas makes his dramas a reflection of life rather than a creative attempt to improve it.

4. Promoting Shakespeare, on the ground that he preserves an integrity of poetic vision which in the others is obfuscated by didacticism.

5. Promoting Milton, on the ground that his penetration of the highest mysteries of faith raises him above Shakespeare's unvarying worldliness and Shelley's callowness.

6. Promoting Shelley, on the ground that his love of freedom speaks to the heart of modern man more immediately than poets who accepted outworn social or religious values.

7. Promoting all three (for this a special style, which we may call the peroration style, should be used).

8. Demoting all three, on the ground of the untidiness of English genius when examined by French or Classical or Chinese standards.

The reader may sympathise with some of these "positions," as they are called, more than with others, and so be seduced into thinking that one of them must be right, and that it is important to decide which one it is. But [the Professor concludes in his driest manner] *long before he has finished his assignment he will realise that the whole procedure involved is an anxiety neurosis prompted by a moral censor, and is totally devoid of content.*

Oh! shades of a thousand tutorials, seminars, and "discussion groups." As we see solemn nonsense after solemn nonsense slipped discreetly into Professor Frye's waste-master, we do not (I think) even give a rousing cheer: the relief is too heartfelt for that. It is that sigh again, pressed into proper service this time, of exquisite thankfulness that at last someone of indisputable scholarship and authority has not only seen through the

Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of death

of modern criticism, but has had the wit (yes, and the courage) to write it down.

But this polemical excursus is nevertheless the least important part of the *Anatomy of Criticism*. Criticism, Professor Frye considers, has hardly even begun to get down to its business seriously. It has not yet even acquired a vocabulary with which to think, being thus in much the same state as philosophy was long, long ago when its terms meant whatever anyone wanted them to mean. What sort of use, for example, is the word "novel," when it has to cover everything from *Gulliver's Travels* to *Finnegan's Wake*? How can we talk about poems with simply the

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

two words, *epic* for pretty long poems, and *lyric* for pretty short ones? Are not most of our comments bound from the start to be "devoid of content?" Professor Frye's heroic attempt is to provide this vocabulary. He considers the whole body of literature and essays to systematise it, advancing in an exploratory manner upon four fronts: classification by Theory of Modes, by Theory of Symbols, by Theory of Myths, and by Theory of Genres. He is the first to realise that

Much of it, I expect, and in fact hope, may be mere scaffolding, to be knocked away when the building is in better shape.

The task is naturally gigantic and too weighty for the shoulders of any single man. Nevertheless, Professor Frye's powers of systematisation are of an altogether extraordinary kind, the kind that, while providing perfectly definite and applicable and mutually excluding criteria, succeeds astonishingly not in killing the subject of the dissection off but in bringing it startlingly and freshly alive. Lesser men would therefore, I think, be wise in accepting Professor Frye's terminology for the time being as it stands, in introducing his categories and specialised vocabulary into their own writings whenever occasion dictates, and in leaving it to the course of the years to dictate whatever subtractions and additions may later seem necessary. They will at least be helping the art of criticism to take its first positive step forward (on the theoretical side) from where Aristotle left it.

But are they likely to, these lesser men? Alas, I think not, and the more lesser the less likely. They have been spinning round on their own tails for too long, and what they will above all hate in the *Anatomy of Criticism* is that, concerning itself with the neglected fundamentals of vocabulary, definition, verbal and logical discipline, it is above all immensely *practical*—and I do *not* mean in the sense of Professor I. A. Richards' *Practical Criticism*, which is extremely well in its place but about as practical in the wider sense as a "practical man" is (the sort who can make an attractive and ornamental book-rest out of a couple of old orange-boxes) in the context of nuclear physics. Poor critics have always avoided the practical. That is why a hundred books a year are published about "poets" and their "poetry" to only one about poetry itself—metric, rhetoric, form: the whole body of creative thought and activity by which and in which every one of those poets moved and had his being. It is also why the average literary man has to kid himself that his "disciplines" are finer than those of the average scientist, whereas the scientist just hasn't to kid himself at all. He

Nansen

LIV NANSEN HØYER

As an Arctic explorer, scientist, politician and humanitarian, Nansen was world-famous, and his achievements in these fields now form part of history. In this book, for the first time, we have a picture of the man behind the public figure, a personal memoir made doubly vivid by quotations from his private diaries and extensive correspondence with his wife during his long absences in the Arctic and as the first Norwegian Ambassador to London.

30s. net

Principality and Polity

Aquinas and the Rise of State Theory in the West

THOMAS GILBY

This new contribution to historical and political studies seizes the moment when the political theory of the West was being formed. From this period date the great Gothic cathedrals, the old universities, the English Common Law and parliamentary institutions; then also under Edward I the Realm of England was consolidated. These practical achievements, recognised as precious parts of our heritage, sprang from a philosophy of life which is still a vital force in our tradition. Without over-simplifying the historical complexities of the time this book isolates the significant movements at work as they converged in Thomas Aquinas, one of the great masters of European thought. Yet it looks back to his times without losing sight of principles that bear on our present and future social and political health. The book covers (1) St. Thomas's sources and the contemporary background. (2) his own thought. Each of these parts is divided into four sections: Theology, law, social history, philosophy.

A History of Indian Shipping

DR. R. K. MOOKERJI

Illustrated 42s. net

LONGMANS

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

knows. And Professor Frye knows. The question is, how many literary gentlemen will have the grace and courage to get up off their tails and join them.

Hilary Corke

The Case of Comrade Leonhard

Child of the Revolution. By WOLFGANG LEONHARD. *Collins.* 25s.

MODERN Oxford is a very internationally-minded place, but it is still a curious thought that there should be in preparation here a doctoral thesis on "de-Stalinisation" by a German graduate of the Comintern school at Kushnarenkovo in the Bashkir Republic. Part of the story behind this was told in German a couple of years ago in Mr. Leonhard's autobiographical work *Die Revolution entlässt ihre Kinder*; this has now appeared in a slightly abbreviated translation by C. M. Woodhouse—an excellent literary effort, though one might guess that it was the "Soviet intelligentsia" and not "Soviet Intelligence" that felt a spiritual link with France.

Mr. Leonhard's story can be summarised briefly. Brought to the Soviet Union as a child by a Communist mother (who was deported to Siberia in the great purge and only rejoined her son in Berlin in 1948), Mr. Leonhard was first educated among the children of the foreign Communist colony, then as a Russian, then trained in the Comintern school, and finally when still only twenty-three dispatched to East Berlin as part of the first plane-load of German Communist exiles sent to lay the foundations of the East German Republic. Four years later he sought asylum in Yugoslavia; and two years later still, he came to the West.

For the political historian, the core of the book will no doubt be found in the detailed account of the methods by which the Communist control of the Eastern Zone of Germany was built up, the way in which its successive disguises were adopted and shed, and the portraits of the personalities involved. If there is anyone left in the West who can still believe that the failure to continue the Grand Alliance into peacetime was due to some failures in Western policy, or that the dissolution of the Comintern was intended as a turning away from the Soviet Union's world-revolutionary vocation, Mr. Leonhard's timetable of events as he saw them from within should provide a powerful antidote. For the historian, however, books of this kind suffer from one obvious defect. The conditions of Soviet official life, to say nothing of the difficulties of "defection," make it impossible that the individual "defector" should either keep a diary or retain it were he to contrive *per impossibile* to keep one. Nor could he have any letters or other papers. Yet at no point in this highly detailed autobiographical narrative does Mr. Leonhard hesitate for an incident, a conversation, or (where security permits) a name. Even admitting that he is a young man of exceptional ability and first-rate intellectual training, can we accept as evidence the product of sheer memory? Ask any man of thirty-five to-day to give an account of his daily doings in 1945, in 1941, and in the years just before the war without access to any personal papers or to anyone he knew then—can one believe that the result would make so coherent (and indeed exciting) a story as Mr. Leonhard tells? Would any judge accept it uncorroborated in a court of law? I think that one must say this, even though one may believe, as I do, both that this honestly represents what Mr. Leonhard believed about himself at the time of writing, and that it is basically a true picture—true because what is new fits so effortlessly into what one already knows or suspects.

This is the case with all such literature—as I have said—but it is specially important where Mr. Leonhard is concerned, and for two reasons. In the first place, Mr. Leonhard is clearly a highly intelligent and articulate young man, not concerned only to tell his story but also to draw its intellectual and moral lessons; and one feels that a lively intelligence is more likely than not to get in the way of a photographic reproduction of the past. In the second place, despite the importance of the book for understanding events in Germany in 1945–6, this is only its subsidiary intention. The main interest is in Mr. Leonhard himself. Why did this young man, who accepted his own mother's deportation and the other incidents of the purge, who saw the obvious inequalities and indeed iniquities of Soviet society in wartime, who was subjected to, and indeed eagerly embraced, a terribly severe and thorough training, and found it natural to be one of the régime's agents (as well as beneficiaries)—why did he of all people "defect" in the end?

In his introduction, Edward Crankshaw, whose own feeling for Soviet realities is indisputable, gives his interpretation. It is Mr. Crankshaw's view that "the ordinary Russian, brought up in the Pioneers and the Komsomol, but not going on to the full Party membership is... rather less thoroughly conditioned than the average product of a British public school," but he admits that Leonhard's conditioning as an "intellectual... chosen and dedicated from his childhood" was "unusually complete" and sug-

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

OUTSTANDING BOOKS OF 1957

Biography

Frederick II of Hohenstaufen

GEORGINA MASSON

" The most magnificent misfit in history. . . . Miss Masson shows him to be worthy of his traditional title ' The Wonder of the World '."—*The Times.* " Miss Masson delineates a man upon whose like none would look again."—*Financial Times.* Illustrated. 35*s.*

The Bombs of Orsini

MICHAEL ST. J. PACKE

"An enthralling story—witty, erudite, eloquent, primed with the piquant daring and desperation that surrounds the men of '48."—*News Chronicle.* " Exact, engrossing and finally moving biography."—*The Spectator.* Illustrated. 25*s.*

Harriet Martineau

VERA WHEATLEY

"A near-perfect biography. Whoever is interested in human character or the 19th century will read this book with fascinated admiration."—*A. J. P. Taylor.* " Singularly enjoyable."—*New Statesman.* Illustrated. 35*s.*

Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox

JAMES MCGREGOR BURNS

"A very good book—clear, thorough, shrewd, amply documented, and well illustrated—a political biography."—*Manchester Guardian.* " Fascinating, accurate, unbiased."—*Sunday Times.* Illustrated. 45*s.*

General

The Irresistible Theatre

W. BRIDGES-ADAMS

"A Standard Work. That smacks of solid worth, but there is much more to Mr. Bridges-Adams than academic merit. He makes it easy to become happily excited as well as usefully informed."—*Ivor Brown.* Illustrated. 42*s.*

The Pursuit of the Millennium

NORMAN COHN

Popular Messianic movements in medieval Europe. "A remarkable book. . . . We must be grateful to Professor Cohn for such lucidity of expression, such wealth of detail and such suggestive thought."—*Steven Runciman* in *The Observer.* 42*s.*

The Opium of the Intellectuals

RAYMOND ARON

Translated by Terence Kilmartin

"A stimulating study of the role of the intellectual in contemporary France and other countries of the western world, as well as their role in the newly liberated countries of Asia."—*T.L.S.* " Long, thoughtful, rather difficult but stimulating."—*Sunday Times.* 35*s.*

SECKER & WARBURG

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gests even that as a German he was "perhaps, more malleable than most Russians." But what did the trick in the end, he believes, was the same with Mr. Leonhard as with the rest: "that human nature which reformers refer to in tones of contempt and contumely, but which developing, is in fact the sole and glorious asset of our race." Now Mr. Crankshaw may of course be right—but the reason he gives is not Mr. Leonhard's reason. And Mr. Leonhard's own version if accepted is both more interesting and in a way much more disturbing.

Mr. Leonhard's version has nothing to do with human nature in the ordinary sense. The reason he gives for abandoning his career as a high-powered Communist official is a purely intellectual one. He was convinced that the handling of the Stalin-Tito dispute by the Cominform was a final proof that Russia under Stalin had abandoned the truths preached and practised by Marx, Engels, and Lenin. His reason for abandoning his post was not that he had ceased to be a Marxian Communist, but that Stalin had.

What further intellectual Odyssey Mr. Leonhard may have undergone or still be undergoing, I do not know. The book ends with his safe arrival in the promised land—Yugoslavia—in 1949; but at that time, he was not merely a Communist (in the non-Stalinist sense) but had little patience with anyone who was not. It was the classics of Communism themselves, and not criticisms from a Western liberal or humanitarian standpoint that shook him, and shook those other servants of the régime who also felt doubtful about the righteousness of their cause. Indeed, he asserts that most of the Western press material and other propaganda that reached such people as himself was entirely without effect, because being un-Marxist it seemed "non-scientific," indifferent to precision in language, uninterested in what seemed to them the real issues of the day, and so in fact irrelevant and even frivolous. One of Mr. Leonhard's jobs in Russia was helping to classify the archives of the Comintern at Ufa after that body's dissolution; and his description of the impact made upon him by finding some odd numbers of an American "Trotskyist" journal would help to explain why Trotsky rather than Hitler was the real word of fear in the Soviet Union even at the height of the war. It is a serious point, and one well worth pondering over by those concerned with propaganda to the "East," that at the time he went to Yugoslavia it never seems to have occurred to Mr. Leonhard to wonder whether perhaps Stalinism was not rather the fulfilment than the corruption of Marx or at least of Lenin, or whether the inconsistencies between doctrine and policy might not arise from the fact that the doctrine itself was not the instrument of precision that he had been taught.

One Comrade Leonhard may come over in the end; but for each one who does, many more remain behind; and as he himself says on looking back at the courses in the East German Party academy where he taught, "these courses are now turning out every year, at an increasing rate, hundreds of thousands of well-trained officials, most of them convinced of the correctness of their outlook on the world." How can there be any dialogue with men whose explanation of what they see wrong with Communism is the failure of leaders or groups to interpret the Communist doctrine correctly? This is where the bipolarity of the world becomes real and frightening. If Mr. Leonhard is right in his facts, the world cannot be saved without another Russian revolution. It has been the hope of the optimists hitherto that one such holocaust was enough, that social evolution and "human nature" would do the rest—was this too much to expect?

Max Beloff

New Novels

Memories of a Catholic Childhood. By Mary McCarthy. *Heinemann*, 21s.

The Complete Works of Nathanael West. *Secker and Warburg*. 25s.

The Volcanoes Above Us. By Norman Lewis. *Cape*. 15s.

The Divine and the Decay. By Bill Hopkins. *MacGibbon & Kee*. 15s.

Voss. By Patrick White. *Eyre and Spottiswoode*. 16s.

I put Mary McCarthy's *Memories* among the novels with some misgiving. They are memories; but interspersed between the episodes are passages explaining how much it is not true and what has been altered for the sake of artistic effect. And I think that settles it. Once you begin altering for the sake of artistic effect, and telling people so, it becomes fiction—*Mark Rutherford* or *David Copperfield*, not Cobbett's *Autobiography*. Miss McCarthy is an awkward customer in other ways too. She writes well enough to be judged by the highest standards, and by those standards she always just fails; though of course she succeeds splendidly by rather lower ones. These are all *New Yorker* pieces; and I will not indulge in the fashionable game of panning the *New Yorker*, since we all read it with so much enjoyment. But it does notoriously cut its con-

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tributions to type, and these belong to the type that satisfies the immense appetite of that periodical for memories of youth, especially if passed among some remote race or strange sect —My Mother was a Bogomil, or Grade School among the Hairy Ainu. Miss McCarthy's girlhood was passed among standard Americans, some of whom were Catholic, some unspecified Protestant, some Jewish; so that her youth was catholic in the comprehensive as well as Catholic in the sectarian sense. And this *double entendre* I take to be intended in her title. However, none of these persuasions is sufficiently occult to require anthropological treatment. Yet that is just the tone she seems to adopt in dealing with her social and religious development at a convent school. Some of it is manifestly authentic, some of it, to one who can only know convent schools from the reports of his friends, seems curiously off-key. And in all of it I found myself longing for the pen of Antonia White, who has done the thing so much better, with so much more delicacy and understanding—whose satire, therefore, where satire is intended, is so much more effective. And there is surely something distasteful in her treatment of the confessional; here even an ex-Catholic owes a measure of that reticence imposed absolutely on the believer.

However, it is perhaps slightly ridiculous to be charging a Partisan Reviewer with impiety. All the other well-known Mary McCarthy qualities are here—the sharpness of observation, the precise expression, and the keen eye for blossoming eccentricities. The formidable intelligence is not given so much ready-made material to work on as in the accounts of more adult and sophisticated societies, but it is equally present. The story is in parts an unhappy one, and never positively happy. Some of the relatives and guardians were monstrous and others cold; yet the resulting childhood unhappiness is given only the slightest emotional expression. This diminishes the sense of reality; but in view of common excesses in the other direction we can be grateful for the restraint. I have said that by the highest standard the book just fails; and one should not say this without trying to substantiate it. I mean it in two ways. The first is a failure of artistic tact. The interpolated passages about how much is true and how much dressed up for publication are really rather disastrous. They raise questions about sincerity, if we regard it as autobiography, or about the integrity of the conception, if we regard it as fiction, which ought not to come up at all. (I find the same intrusion of an alien mode in the rather graduate-school discussions of tragedy in Miss McCarthy's last book.) The second failure is more serious. Miss McCarthy has an immense analytical power, and she is always using it, with

Gulbenkian

JOHN LODWICK

John Lodwick, the novelist, in collaboration with D. H. Young (for twenty years Gulbenkian's secretary) presents the *inside* story – much of which even the family cannot know – of Calouste Sarkis Gulbenkian. An unconventional and brilliant "interpretation." 21s.

Erskine Caldwell

CERTAIN WOMEN

Seven variations on the eternal theme of love among the inhabitants of a dusty mid-American town. "Caldwell tells his tales with an easy colloquial style and a born storyteller's gift of making the reader want to know what happens next." *Time.* 15s.

Joseph Conrad

RICHARD CURLE

Joseph Conrad and his Characters: A study by Conrad's closest friend of his six major novels. "His book is stimulating and readable in itself, and should bring new readers to Conrad." *The Times.* 21s.

The Plays of

John Whiting

This volume, containing *Marching Song*, *Saint's Day* and *Penny for a Song* gives the public their first opportunity of reading – in a convenient form – the work of this very important British playwright. 21s.

HEINEMANN

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

great acuteness, on her characters and situations. Yet the sense of absolutely just and authentic judgment that we get from the really good novelist is never felt. Her scale of values seems curiously incomplete. In a writer with less intelligence and penetration one would hardly remark on it. Here one does. It is a question whether the lack is of something essential; or whether it is just a consequence of magazine publication.

I FIND it hard to regard the Nathanael West omnibus as much more than a period piece, an impression which is confirmed by the appalling typography of the title-page. It is made up of four short novels. Of these "Miss Lonelyhearts" has had a justified minor celebrity. (The claim that West is one of the greatest of the American writers of this century is surely absurd?) This horrifying nouvelle of an agony-column writer, who becomes so deeply involved with the hopeless misery of his correspondents that he comes to make a hysterical identification of himself with Christ, succeeds in capturing a mood of megalopolitan despair with great power. Written during the depression, it reflects something of the truth about its period, and perhaps something that is a general truth (one general truth among many) about American big-city life. But for all the hero's messianic delusions, it is nausea rather than charity that remains as the final flavour of the book. Of the rest, "The Dream Life of Balso Snell" is a piece of juvenile surrealism, better left buried. Part of it concerns the life of Saint Puce, a flea who lived in the armpit of Christ, and part the diary of an insane schoolboy. The setting, I forgot to say, is in the rectal passages of the Trojan Horse. "A Cool Million" is a sort of American *Candide*, not very much on the mark in its social criticism, and told in a parody best-seller style inapt for sustained irony. The worst of doing a whole tale in a parody of a despised manner is that it can hardly avoid reproducing many of the defects of the original. "The Day of the Locust," written in 1939, makes a more serious attempt to grapple with the realities of the situation it presents. It is the fruit of West's sojourn in Hollywood, and shows a squalid and pointless life in a tone of half-fascinated horror. There are scenes of considerable force; but the continual nerveless acquiescence of people who are beaten before they start is a hopeless theme for any but a very narrow kind of success. Reading these revivals one feels a strange contrast with the general tone of reassurance breathed by current American letters.

The Volcanoes Above Us has an excellent theme—the contrast between an old dictatorial oppression and the new oppression of enlightened industrial methods. The contrast turns out to be illusory, and what comes out in the end is a spiritual identity. The theme is worked out in a varied and tautly-constructed plot, and both scene and characters are sharply and authentically drawn. Admirably written, certainly a distinguished piece of writing—yet one asks why it does not make a greater impact. The answer, I think, is that there are too many reminiscences. Revolution in a South American state recalls *Nostromo*, the religion of the Chilam Indians recalls *The Plumed Serpent*; and these massive shadows in the background are rather too weighty to be comfortable for a novel conceived on a smaller scale. More unfortunately, the basic character-contrast is one that we have seen before. The hero is knowledgable, disillusioned, English, has a rather nice native mistress and a not quite impeccable past; his antagonist is full of ideals and civilising influences, gets involved in some very shady transactions, is blankly incapable of realising the effect of his activities, and (need I add?) is a representative of the United States. This is altogether too near the situation of *The Quiet American*, and though it is one to which every cisatlantic bosom returns an echo—well, once is enough.

The Divine and the Decay, by Bill Hopkins, is a matter for child guidance rather than criticism; but since it is possibly symptomatic of something or other it should be noticed here. It is an adolescent power-fantasy, extremely shoddily written, about a Fascist leader who after committing a political murder prepares a sort of apotheosis on a Channel island where he has retired to prepare his campaign. It is not surprising that adolescent power fantasies should occur. What is surprising, after the history of the last thirty years, is that even the naïvest masturbations of the most unhappy young man should be able to take this openly Fascist form. The fact that this performance has been treated in some quarters with a moderate respect shows that there is a dangerous vacuum in our present culture that could easily be filled with highly unpleasant material; though not, I should have thought, with anything as poisonously silly as this.

IT IS of course important that the novel, which seems for long to have been given to sensibility and the critical faculty should be able to treat positively the themes of power and pride. It is one of the distinctions of the formidable *Voss* to achieve this. When one of Mr. White's earlier novels appeared, comparisons with Tolstoy and Lawrence were incautiously bandied about. I

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

should not invoke either of those names here; but *Voss* is a serious novel on a large scale, with a slow-moving, massive creative energy that one does not often see. This appears both in the theme and the presentation. The theme is an attempted crossing of Australia in 1845. Voss, the explorer, is a German, and seems to be a disciple of Nietzche *avant la lettre*. He is a creature of fanatical pride, stiffness, and determination, and he drives his small expedition on until it founders, in conditions of slow horror, in the desert. Voss' only link with normal feeling is his tie with a young woman he has met in Sydney shortly before his departure; and he maintains a spiritual communion with her throughout the journey. As much as Voss himself she is a memorable creation. Quite without any novel-heroine's charms, she grows and develops before our eyes, with a leisurely power and conviction that is extremely rare in contemporary fiction. Two quite different kinds of setting are also admirably done—one the small, formal social world of colonial Sydney, the other the extraordinary scenery of the bush and the desert. There is no elaborate splashing of local colour, yet both are impressed upon us with an absolute and unforced actuality. The relation between Voss and Laura Trevelyan is hardly a human relation at all; their contacts are of the slightest in life, yet the bond between them is supposed to be absolute. And here I think the novel begins to run into difficulties—difficulties which are hardly possible to surmount. In this connection Voss' attitude is the less successfully brought out. But it is remarkable to find in the one book a story of pride, endeavour, and the problem of leadership on the one hand, and a confined, lonely, and difficult feminine development on the other.

Mr. White is sufficiently self-assured to dispense absolutely with charm. He develops his effects amply and rather ponderously; and there is not a single character for whom we are allowed to feel an easy sympathy. An unusual feature of the book is that the dialogue is all distinctly stylised. No one speaks in a dialect exactly such as he might have used, yet the speech of every one reveals something about his character and circumstances. We are so used to a slick naturalism to-day that the effect of this formalisation is striking. It is, I think, completely successful. We are aware of reading the product of a conscious art, not something off a tape-recorder; and this awareness in itself is welcome. But more important, it adds its quota to the total effect, which I do not exaggerate in calling one of grandeur.

Graham Hough

SOVIET SURVEY

edited by Walter Laqueur

★

The forthcoming issue of *Soviet Survey* (now a quarterly of 72 pages) will contain a symposium on "Science, Fiction, and Science Fiction in the U.S.S.R.". The principal contents will be :

"In the Light of the Silvery Sputnik"
Notes on Soviet Science Fiction

The Soviet Detective Story

Scientists in the Mirror of Soviet Literature

English and American Literature after 1917
What the textbooks say

Children's Literature after Stalin
Helen Rapp

G. Lukacz – An Intellectual Biography
Morris Watnick

Soviet Physicists Discuss Their Problems
Gustav A. Wetter, S.J.

A Re-appraisal of Soviet Writers
Gleb Struve

★

Order your copy now

Price 3s. Annual Subscription 12s. (U.S.A. & Canada $2)

SOVIET SURVEY : 25 HAYMARKET LONDON SW1

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

About Our Authors

Nicola Chiaromonte, co-editor (with Ignazio Silone) of Tempo Presente *in Rome, has written us as follows about* Tommaso Landolfi:

"To those abroad who are accustomed to thinking of contemporary Italian literature in terms of 'neo-realism,' Tommaso Landolfi's writing will reveal a quite different tendency: complete contempt for reality 'as it is,' expressing itself in a humour which, by way of the surrealistic experience, goes back directly to Checkhov and Gogol, with something very much like romantic 'spleen' at the bottom. The influence of surrealism is apparent in his first two books, *Dialogo dei massimi sistemi* (the title of Galileo's main work—1937) and *La pietra lunare* ('The Moonstone'—1939), which are still among Landolfi's most significant accomplishments. Later on, he became less concerned with stylistic and imaginative feats, but his approach to reality remained one of sarcastic aloofness, guided by an unfailing sense of the grotesque and the absurd. *La Spada* ('The Sword'—1942) and *Le due Zitelle* ('Two Spinsters'—1947) belong to this period. They were followed by *Racconti d'Autunno* ('Autumn Tales'—1948), and *Ombre* ('Shadows'—1956), which contain some of his best stories.

"Two themes, or shall we say myths, dominate Landolfi's mature writing: the impossibility of love, and the ever-recurring self-deception of gambling. There is nothing in Italian contemporary literature as unsentimental and ferocious as Landolfi's view of love and women. The story 'Gogol's Wife,' which is published here, is a good example of it. And it is no exaggeration to say that, since Dostoievski, nobody has written about gambling with such penetration as Landolfi. Nobody, in fact, has known how to give himself so completely to this passion, while at the same time remaining so ironically self-conscious. Gambling, with Landolfi, becomes a view of life: the reduction to absurdity of the relationship between the individual and the universe. His gambler, one might say, is the humorous counterpart of Camus' Sisyphus.

"Born in 1908 in Pico, south of Rome, the son of a small landowner, Landolfi has been living there since the war in a quasi-complete seclusion. He writes a column of literary criticism for the weekly *Il Mondo*, which has also published most of his recent writing. Extremely conversant with modern literature, Landolfi has a thorough knowledge of the Russian language. Italy owes to him a splendid translation of Gogol's stories."

Sylvia Sprigge, born in Scotland, educated in England, France, and Germany, lived in Italy from 1927–31 and represented the *Manchester Guardian* there. In the last war, besides founding and editing *The Abinger Chronicle*, she worked some years at the Ministry of Labour and in the B.B.C. After a spell as assistant Diplomatic Correspondent at the *Manchester Guardian* in London, she went back to Italy for the paper from 1944–53. Among her translations from the Italian are two books by Benedetto Croce.

J. A. Lukacs, a native of Hungary who emigrated to the U.S. in 1946, is lecturer in history at La Salle College in Philadelphia.... Daniel Bell is labour editor of *Fortune* magazine and lecturer in sociology at Columbia University. This article is based on a *discours* given recently by Mr. Bell at the Sorbonne.... Erich Heller, author of *The Disinherited Mind*, is Professor of German at the University of Wales.... Paul Ignotus is president of the Hungarian Writers' Association.

The editorial and business offices of Encounter are at 25 Haymarket London S.W.1. MSS. should be accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope (English stamp) or international reply coupon, otherwise they cannot be returned.

Encounter is published by Martin Secker and Warburg Ltd. 7 John Street, Bloomsbury, W.C.1.

for

THE CONGRESS FOR CULTURAL FREEDOM

104 Boulevard Haussman, Paris 8, France

President of the Executive Committee
Denis de Rougemont

Secretary-General
Nicolas Nabokov

The views expressed in the pages of Encounter *are to be attributed to the writers not to the sponsors*

MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED, LONDON AND BECCLES

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ENCOUNTER

The English subscription rate is £2 a year, including postage, payable to a newsagent or direct to ENCOUNTER, 25 Haymarket, London, S.W.1. The foreign agents listed below will be pleased to accept subscriptions in local currency at the annual rates indicated.

U.S.A. AND CANADA

British Publications Inc., 30 East 60th Street, New York 22 ($7.50)

INDIA

International Book House (Private) Ltd., 9 Ash Lane, Bombay 1 (Rs. 12/-)

PAKISTAN

W. J. Jeffrey Ltd., 254 Ingle Road, Karachi (Rs. 12/-)

CEYLON

Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd., Lake House Bookshop, Colombo (Rs. 12/-)

BURMA

Smart and Mookerdum, 221 Sule Pagoda Road, Rangoon (12 kyats)

HONG KONG

Asia Press Ltd., 88 Yee Wo Street, Causeway Bay (HK $22.00)

PHILIPPINES

Philippine Education Co. Inc., 1104 Castillejos, Quiapo, Manila ($7.50)

JAPAN

Charles E. Tuttle Company, 15 Edogawa-chu, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo (1800 yen)

OTHER COUNTRIES

Encounter has agents in most other countries; names and addresses can be supplied on request. In general, overseas readers can usually pay direct to London by international money order obtainable from a post office.

Universities and Left Review

Winter 1957-8

JOHN STRACHEY
THE GERMAN TRAGEDY

ERNEST GELLNER
AGAINST LOGICAL POSITIVISM

FRANCOIS FEJTO
HUNGARY AND SOCIALISM

KAREL REISZ
A USE FOR DOCUMENTARIES

JOHN SAVILLE
LABOUR MOVEMENT HISTORIOGRAPHY

and

THE INSIDERS

A 40,000 word study of the men who rule British industry, with 14 tables

Annual subscription, 10s. 6d. (three issues)

MRS. JANET HASE,
66 LADBROKE GROVE, LONDON, W.11

To keep track of developments in Burma you need to read

THE GUARDIAN MAGAZINE

The GUARDIAN strives to reflect the essential and significant in the life of Burma, and to interpret not only the passing scene but also the drift of the main social, economic, political and literary currents.

Published monthly by
The GUARDIAN Ltd.,
55, Barr Street, Rangoon, Burma
P.O. Box 1522

£2 per year post free.
Air charges extra.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CLASSICS CLUB

ADVERTISING THAT APPEARS IN THE POPULAR MEDIA HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS WRITTEN IN Arabian Nights language. Long-playing records (with many superlatives thrown in free) are offered for as little as 14/11 per record, and the public is asked to believe that these records are fully the equivalent, both as to performance and as to their standards of manufacture, of records costing 40/- each. Just imagine—the Brandenburg Concerti Nos. 4 and 5 (on one record) for 14/11 only; and we here at CLASSICS CLUB believing (and not hesitating to state in print) that our recording of these two Brandenburgs is better than any other.

A. E. WOODWARD-NUTT, BECKENHAM.

I have been buying records for over 35 years. A few months ago, with considerable scepticism, I tried a CLASSICS CLUB record. I was delighted with it. I have had several since and am convinced that for consistently high quality and value for money they are unsurpassed.

SISTER MARY D'AMIEN, SOUTHAMPTON.

CLASSICS CLUB records beat all other records for musical beauty, faultless quality and perfect reproduction.

P. J. HOLT, URMSTON, LANCS.

CLASSICS CLUB is a truly reliable club. You offer expertly prepared records of finest music for an amazingly low price, and promptly delivered.

D. T. DEBENHAM, BARGOED.

Your records are definitely the best value obtainable in respect of both musical purity and reproduction. They undoubtedly surpass the recordings of even so-called well-known orchestras and companies.

D. J. PARSONS, FARNHAM.

I have never heard better recordings at any price—let alone 14/11.

A. H. BONN, LONDON, W.1.

Perhaps the finest opportunity that lovers of classical music will ever have to build a magnificent library of superb recordings at reasonable cost.

We at CLASSICS CLUB have made even stronger claims than this. We claim, always fearful lest we be accused of modesty, that as well as great recordings at 14/11 each, we also issue to our members unique recordings—that is, recordings not anywhere else obtainable in Britain, even at 40/- or, as best we know, 80/-.

But not all our time is spent counting shillings. There are other things too. For example, Leopold Mozart's Trumpet Concerto is, we think, although obtainable nowhere else, infinitely more charming than Haydn's Trumpet Concerto, delightful as Haydn's is. CLASSICS CLUB put them both on to one record; charge for it our standard price of 14/11 only; delight our membership; preen ourselves at another "First and Only." Who plays it? Roger Delmotte, first trumpet of the Paris *Orchestre de l'Opéra* (Serge Baudo conducting).

True, most of our records are the war-horses of the standard classical repertoire—Franck's Symphony in D Minor, Dvorak's 3rd and Tchaikovsky's 4th, Bizet's Symphony in C, Beethoven's Emperor Concerto, Mozart's Linz, Haydn's Miracle (backed by his 46th), and many similar (and Chamber Music too—Schubert's Trio No. 1 in B Flat Major, and his Trout Quintet, and Beethoven's Archduke Trio, for example) all costing our members 14/11 each, all complete to the last note, all performed by great Continental, British and American orchestras and performers, conducted by top-flight conductors.

But what of Perotinus, Corelli, Scarlatti? War-horses? *Hardly*. And the choral works of Tallis and Gibbons, performed by the celebrated American Dessoff Choirs? War-horses? *Hardly*. Or Handel's Italian Cantatas, played by the Orchestra of the Netherlands Handel Society, and sung by Dora van Doorn, Leo Larsen and David Hollestelle? War-horses? Hardly, hardly, hardly.

Indeed, CLASSICS CLUB 1958 programme is designed to serve not only the public taste, but also the needs (and longings) of the Collector. Rare recordings, faultlessly performed, and equally offered at fractional prices, will delight our Collector members. And our thrilling 1958 programme, with all the popular works of the classical repertoire, will bring recorded music into tens of thousands of British homes which heretofore have *hardly* been able to afford them.

CLASSICS CLUB charge no entrance fee. Our members make us no pledge or promise. Our records are guaranteed.

When members of the public write to me I feel flattered; and by return of post send them quite a lot to read and think about. If, instead, they decide to hazard all of 14/11 (or 29/10) by sending me a cheque or postal order—payable to CLASSICS CLUB—for their first record (or records, *on approval*, they always receive them with the Club's unconditional guarantee, this too by return of post.

The Club's unconditional guarantee makes interesting reading. Summarised, it says that if you are not wholly delighted your money is refunded in full. CLASSICS CLUB'S refunds to those who request them are less than one eighth of one per cent—yes, not one person in 800 would rather have his money than our records.

We are very proud about that.

THIS IS A COUPON—AN UNUSUAL SORT. But so are CLASSICS CLUB prices in this day and age when everything costs more. Please do address it to me personally. I will find it extremely helpful if you do, and it will ensure my being able to give it my personal attention. All you have to do is to accompany it with a slip of paper bearing your name and address in block capitals, and your remittance in the sum of 14/11 for each and any of the records I have mentioned in this advertisement and which you may wish to have me send you on approval. My own favourites are the two Trumpet Concertos (on one record), and Schubert's Trio No. 1 in B Flat Major. It will be interesting for me to compare your choice with mine. Incidentally, if you join us, you will be hearing from me month by month. I am the Editor of CLASSICS CLUB NEWS.

Dorothy B. Whistler

127 KENSAL RD., LONDON, W.10.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED